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THE
CONTINUOUS CREATION

AN APPLICATION OF THE EVOLUTIONARY
PHILOSOPHY TO THE CHRISTIAN
RELIGION

BY

MYRON ADAMS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1893

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THIRD EDITION.

The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.
Electrotyped and Printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.

To
PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK,

FROM WHICH, AS MEMBER AND PASTOR, THE AUTHOR HAS FOR
MANY YEARS RECEIVED GREAT KINDNESS, AND, ABOVE
ALL, THE KINDNESS OF A PATIENT AND CAN-
DID HEARING FOR THINGS "NEW
AND OLD,"

This Volume

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

"BUT evolution, properly considered, not only does not put God at a distance, nor obscure his form behind the order of nature, but draws him nearer, and even goes far towards breaking down the walls of mystery that shut him out from human vision. In other words, in evolution we see a *revelation* of God, while in previous theories of creation we had only an *assertion* of God. In evolution we have the first cause working by connected processes in an orderly way; in former theories we had a first cause creating the universe by one omnipotent fiat, ordaining its laws, and then leaving it to its courses or merely upholding it by his power. In respect of nearness, we at once see that evolution brings God nearer than do the other theories."

T. T. MUNGER in *'Appeal to Life.*

PREFACE.

“AN inevitable revolution,” says Matthew Arnold, “of which we all recognize the beginnings and signs, but which has really spread, perhaps, farther than most of us think, is befalling the religion in which we have been brought up.”

Dr. Theodore T. Munger declares the “showing the possibility of thinking under the principle of evolution and also as Christian believers” to be “the most imperative work now pressing upon religious teachers who are able to discern the signs of the times, and who would serve their day and generation.”

The writer of this volume conceives the inevitable revolution to be part of that evolution by which God continues the higher processes of creation. He also conceives not only the possibility of thinking under the principle of evolution, and at the same time as a Christian believer, but he thinks he perceives that before long it will be found impossible to think clearly in any other way.

Perhaps no apology is needed for the somewhat free use made of the works of Professors LeConte and Fiske; the occasional use made of the works of

Professor Tyndall and Edward Clodd, of Bushnell, Beecher, Munger, Maurice, and others; and that not always with specific acknowledgment. The acknowledgment is made wherever the author is conscious of his debt, and yet the debt is far greater than he could thus indicate, since it is in the writings of such men he traces some lines of that on-going creation by which God more and more reveals Himself.

OCTOBER, 1889.

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THE CONTINUOUS CREATION.

I.

EVOLUTION.

ON the 24th of November, 1859, Mr. Charles Darwin's book on "Origin of Species" issued from the press.¹ The edition consisted of 1250 copies, and all the copies were sold the first day. Before the end of the same year a second edition of 3000 copies was published. And it may therefore be said that the new era in philosophy began about the year 1860, or a little more than a quarter of a century ago.

Two centuries earlier, by the publication of the "Principia," Sir Isaac Newton announced to the world that theory of the relations of things in space known as the law of universal gravitation. The "Principia" was issued in 1687. Three years later the theory was adopted by St. Andrews College, twelve years later by Cambridge, and seventeen years later by Oxford. But the French mathematicians did not fully adopt these views until after half a century.

It will readily be seen upon reflection that there were grave difficulties in the way of the acceptance of such a theory, because the foundations of philosophies, time-honored and all-authoritative, would be

¹ Darwin's *Life and Letters*.

sapped, and the religious teachings of many centuries would have to be in part reconsidered, if not abandoned. But although the difficulties were enormous, the theory in due time commanded universal assent, and became the basis of all subsequent work in the domain which it covers.

So far as the theory of universal gravitation is related to our present purpose, we may conceive of men as gazing at the heavens and asking why the moon occupied its station; why the sun and stars continued in their places. And the observers would answer, each according to his philosophy. One would say that the situation of the heavenly bodies with relation to the earth and each other is determined purely by chance. Another would recoil in horror from such a basis of thought, and declare that the sun, moon, and stars are where they are because God, the Creator, has put them there, and they remain in their places because He so ordains. Newton touched not upon the answers given by such observers, but simply announced a law which governs in all cases. He threw the question, as to why the heavenly bodies are where they are, back of another question which he succeeded in answering. He demonstrated that there is in nature a law. If an apple hanging upon the bough of a tree is dislodged, it will fall to the earth by the shortest path. Every one already knew the fact; he, however, was the first to give this explanation of it, that the descent of the apple is determined by an universal law. By the same law the sun occupies his station, and all the stars of the abyss are where they are.

But it was no part of his function to answer the other question as to why the law existed. Every one

would be compelled to answer that for himself. The one who believed in chance might still continue to believe in chance, and that the law was the operation of chance; — and the one who believed in the Almighty God would refer the law to His wisdom. Apparently, therefore, the discovery of the theory of universal gravitation left the religious opinions of people where it found them. The man who believed in God might continue so to believe, and the atheist might continue to be an atheist. Yet Newton's discovery, or invention, had a profound effect upon all thought, religious and non-religious, because it introduced, as no other and previous discovery had done, the idea of the universal reign of law. No doubt the idea had been growing before Newton formulated it, but he did formulate it so that the idea, which had been nebulous and ineffective, now took tangible form, and became a great power.

The old way of thinking may be illustrated by the oldest way of thinking, as shown, for instance, in the Homeric tales and other similar ancient writings. A philosophy underlies all such tales. The ancient man had a most crude and imperfect theory of causation. There was, to be sure, an order, in accordance with which things usually went on, but there was nothing settled or stable about it. If anything out of the ordinary occurred, the ancient man said it was on account of the interference of some superior being. War was somewhat out of the usual course, and therefore it was assumed that it was partly the result of some feeling in the minds of various celestial intelligences. There was jealousy, or revenge, or love, or lust in the minds of gods and goddesses to account for wars. Was there a great storm at sea?

A goddess is in a bad temper, and wishes to scatter the fleet and drown the followers of some favorite of another goddess. She accordingly repairs to the being who has charge of the winds and induces him to let them out of their ordinary confinement, to have a frolic over the sea. Is there a cessation of the storm? It is because the god who has control of the sea is aroused by the unusual clamor, and stirs himself up to see what the matter is, and he drives the winds back to their prison. All things considered, that was the easiest philosophy for the ancient man, in his poverty of information of facts and laws.

With the experience of the race, this philosophy was gradually undermined, leaving traces of its power only in the least intelligent of the inhabitants of the earth. And this experience at last formulated itself in Newton's proclamation of universal law.

I suppose all men understand the law of gravitation, stated as universal in its operation, to be simply a theory, provided to account for the facts which come under our observation. I think I may say that it has been demonstrated, or pointed out to be true, but, strictly speaking, it has not been proved. It cannot be proved, because we have not access to universal facts, but only to a small range of facts. The farther we go in our search for facts, the more we are convinced that the law is universal. But it cannot be proved, in the absolute sense of proof, that an apple dislodged from the bough of a tree in the north star would fall by the shortest path to the ground. If an unbeliever declared that the apple sailed off like a thistle-down, or that it went up like a balloon, or remained stationary, just as it was before, the only way to convert him from the error of his thinking would be to convince

him of the application of the theory of gravitation to all facts which are in the range of our observation. Then he would feel at liberty, or even forced, to believe that the apple falls in the north star, or anywhere else, as it does on the earth.

Permit me to apprise you of the fact that Sir Isaac Newton made an immense inference, a perfectly prodigious assumption, in his theory of gravitation. And we all cordially assent to it. The assumption was that all bodies attract each other directly as their masses, and inversely as the squares of their distance. Some bodies do. We now have an overwhelming conviction that all bodies do. But our conviction is perhaps as much the result of faith, *i. e.*, faith in the uniformity of nature, as of anything.

To sum up the effects of Newton's announcement in brief: It answers the question as to the relation of things in space, as *e. g.*, the relation of the earth to the sun, to the moon; the relation of all the bodies of our solar system to each other, as determined by the law of the attraction of gravitation. The apple falls, the earth falls, the sun falls, and the remotest and the greatest globe falls, toward a centre of attraction.

Perhaps it may be asked what all this has to do with evolution. This. It is the proper and necessary antecedent of evolution. As Professor LeConte has pointed out in his admirable book, "Evolution, and its Relation to Religious Thought," the law of gravitation is the theory of the relation of things in space; and the law of evolution is the theory of the relation of things in time. Time and space are the two terms connected with all scientific thought.

It is evident to the student who considers the history of evolution that when once the universality of law is

established concerning the relation of things in space, the next step will be the establishment of the corresponding principle concerning the relations of things in time.

I wish particularly to call your attention to this, — that the doctrine of evolution is no new thing in the world. People have noticed evolution as long as they have noticed anything of an intricate and complex nature. The idea is contained in an exceedingly ancient Egyptian myth, of a mundane egg from which all things successively emerge. Some of the Greek philosophers¹ taught a doctrine akin to evolution, as did Lucretius in his famous poem “Concerning the Nature of Things;” but of course that was the guess-work of speculation, and that the speculation of those who were very ignorant of the facts of nature.

But more than that. The actual process of evolution has been noted commonly from the earliest times; noted just as the law of gravity was noted. Those who saw the fall of the apple and pondered upon it saw also the growth of plants, and contemplated the development of the bird from the egg. But apparently the universality of the law of gravitation and of the corresponding law of development did not dawn upon the mind of the world until the days of Newton and of Darwin. And permit me to say here that an evolutionist is not the one who believes there is such a process as evolution. All people do believe that, and always have; but the one who believes the law of evolution is as universal as the law of gravitation is

¹ All Greek philosophers who treated Cosmology at all held an evolutionary theory of the universe. The idea of fiat creation was absolutely unknown to them. Lucretius is conspicuous as a *materialistic* evolutionist.

an evolutionist. And I venture the prediction that within a quarter of a century the theory of evolution will occupy the same place in the material philosophy of the world that the law of gravitation has had for the past century and a half. And it will occupy a place immensely greater, because it takes hold upon all finite life. Sixteen years ago Professor Youmans wrote substantially this: "Darwin, Huxley, Mivart, Haeckel, Cope, Spencer, may be at fault, but in common with a large and increasing body of scientific men they are all agreed as to one thing, that evolution is a great established fact, a wide and valid induction from the observed facts of nature, the complete elucidation of which is the grand scientific task of the future." But in sixteen years great changes have come. And during that period the doctrine of evolution has gained ground every moment.

Now, what is evolution, and why should it be discussed from a Christian pulpit?

The first question is answered briefly, — to be expanded later, — and in answering it, I will employ the definition of Professor LeConte, as sufficiently accurate for our purpose. Evolution is (1) continuous progressive change, (2) according to certain laws, (3) by means of resident forces. In other words, evolution tells us, not who created us and all things, but how we and all things are created. Or, that the process of creation is not complete, but is continuously in operation; that creation is according to certain laws, and can be studied only in the light of those laws; that creation goes on by powers and forces not absent from the thing created, and therefore not by means of a fiat of a Being separate from His works.

Certainly, if this is true, it must have a profound

effect upon religious feelings, and will surely bring about a great modification of religious philosophy; and therefore it is something to which the Christian ministry of to-day ought to give the most earnest heed.

If it is true, it cannot be dismissed easily, as being apart from religion, for it already occupies a prominent place in Christian thought; indeed the feeling is increasing that it is divinely intended to serve as a great illumination upon important matters, heretofore shrouded in mystery.

But is it true? The evidence in its favor is already overwhelming. Let me quote from the author, Professor LeConte, of whom the "Christian Union" says: "He is a devout Christian believer; he is also a radical evolutionist." He says: "We are confident that evolution is absolutely certain. Not indeed, evolution as a special theory, — Lamarckian, Darwinian, Spencerian, — for these are all more or less successful modes of explaining evolution; nor evolution as a school of thought, with its following of disciples, — for in this sense it is still in the field of discussion, — but evolution as a law of derivation of forms from previous forms; evolution as a law of continuity, as a universal law of becoming. In this sense it is not only certain, it is axiomatic."

For my own part, the teachings of the Christ, the life that He lived, the death that He died, are of more profound interest than any theory of creation could be.

Of more profound interest to all of us are the truths which make for righteousness and moral well-being than the truths of science and scientific philosophy. But the thoughts which have obtained concerning

Christ and His religion are inevitably changing, by reason of the great discoveries of modern times; and I cannot but conceive that this change is part of the divine creation. While the Christian religion is itself indestructible, the philosophy of it changes as the outlook of men increases.

In 1850 Carlyle wrote, perhaps not wisely, but suggestively: "The Present Time, youngest born of Eternity, child and heir of all the past times, with their good and evil, and parent of all the future, is ever a new era to the thinking man, and comes with new questions and significance, however commonplace it looks. To know it, and what it bids us do, is ever the sum of knowledge for all of us. . . .

"There must be a new world, if there is to be a world at all! That human things in our Europe can ever return to the old sorry routine, and proceed with any steadiness or continuance there, this small hope is not now a tenable one."

Yes, we are entering a new world of religious thought, and of religious endeavor therefore. The old is passing away—has, in fact, to many passed away. By unmistakable voices we are invited to enter the "New Era," from which it is impossible for God to be absent.

I utter but the commonplace of the thought of a multitude of sincere Christian men when I say that revelation has not been completed in the past; that it goes on with increase, and multiplies itself; it must multiply itself, according to the law which promises that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

II.

THE CONTINUOUS CREATION.

“These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.” — GENESIS ii. 4, 5.

IT has been remarked in connection with the present interest in the subject of evolution, that it is not so important for us to consider how we came to be what we are, as to consider what we actually are, and how we may become changed for the better. It is true. There is nothing of which we ought to be so solicitous as our actual condition. We certainly ought to realize that we are responsible beings, that we are bound by every consideration of righteousness to be rid of wrong of all forms and to cleave to that which is good. But the claim of evolution is that it offers a help to us, by showing us how we came to be what we are. It makes more clear to us the process, following which we may the more thoroughly coöperate with our Creator in His design to bring us out of darkness into light, and out of sin into righteousness.

I therefore invite you to think of the continuous creation.

The story of creation has been told in various ways, since first rational beings were able to put their thoughts upon the subject into language. And it was

natural that the subject should engage the attention of the more thoughtful of mankind, in every age. Did the earth, our dwelling place, always exist; or did it come into existence at some period? And if it did come into being at some definite period, how was it produced? Of course we are all familiar with the theory of creation which has obtained in the Christian world since the earliest age of Christianity, and which was held by the Hebrews from an earlier time. This theory has been understood to be plainly taught in the opening chapter of the Bible.

It may be stated thus: About six thousand years ago there was no earth. And not only so, but there was no sun and no star. But about six thousand years ago the Almighty God, in the exercise of unlimited power and wisdom, made the earth. At first the earth was without form, a waste place, and was covered with darkness. Then God created light. That was the first day. The next day God created the sky, — the firmament as it was called. The inference would be that there was no sky before the second day, just as there was no earth before the first day. The third day God created the dry ground, or, at least, He separated between the ground and the water; and He caused grass, herb, and fruit tree to spring up. Fourth day, the sun and moon, for the purpose of giving light upon the earth. Fifth day, water creatures and birds. Sixth day, cattle and all beasts and creeping things, and man. There is a process, but such a swift process that it is like magic. All done within six days of the usual length.

But of late, the geologist, seeking for what information was possible to him, in the various rocks which make up the surface of the earth, has shown quite

conclusively that the earth was not made in a day. The relations of the various layers of rocks which overlie each other, and the fact that they contain shells of once living animals, convince him that the earth was a very long time in formation. Of course Infinite Power could have made fossil trilobites, and shells of a thousand kinds, like some of those we find upon the beach of the sea, and could have embedded them in the rocks, and then could have made different rocks on top of these and put different shells in them, and so on. But we do not now stop to inquire what Infinite Power could do, because we have not the time to spend in such thought, but we inquire what Infinite Power did. Accordingly the geologist has convinced the intelligent portion of the world, beyond a peradventure, that immense and even incalculable ages were required to bring the earth to its present condition. It is not worth while to follow the details of the formidable proof the geologist offers; suffice it to say that it is entirely satisfactory to intelligence. To the criticism that this teaching of geology is contradictory of the teachings of the Biblical story, it is answered that the Genesis account is entirely silent upon the whole subject of the creation of the globe; that before the historic account begins there may have been an eternal process going on for all that the story says to the contrary. Now, so much of the story of creation as was based upon the notion that the earth is but a few thousands of years old has been entirely abandoned by intelligent persons. Geology has shown the earth in its different periods of construction,—as in the molten state, as in the less heated stage, as in the frozen stage. It has pointed out that plants must have existed millions upon millions of years ago, because

it finds their shape embedded in the rocks which were upon the surface of the earth far back in antiquity. Geology is the record which the Creator made of His work as He went along with it.

Wherefore, the old story of creation, as it was told for many centuries, can be told no longer. At least, so far as the antiquity of our globe is concerned. The old knowledge has been displaced by the new and more perfect knowledge.

But some one might say: "This is all very good and true; we are convinced that the earth (minus animal and vegetable life) was a long time in process of construction; but can we not believe that God took the earth in hand some few thousands of years ago and fitted it up for the residence of man, making first the vegetation, then the animals, and then man?" It is obvious, from the discoveries of geology, already spoken of, that vegetation was on the earth countless ages ago. Also that animals were the inhabitants of the earth, not only a few thousands of years ago, but perhaps millions of centuries ago. Moreover, we behold a thing well worthy our attention in this old earth. As we approach the beginning of life on the planet, we meet comparatively simple forms of life. There was a period when no life existed. Beginning from that, and marching upward through the staircase of recorded facts, we discover, first, the simplest forms, such as the *algæ*, among the plants, and the *monera* among animals. The age which has left such record of itself we call the Eozoic. That is the dawn-life. Then come ferns and fishes. Then the pine-tree and the reptile. Then the tree with a true leaf, and the mammal. Then the sort of vegetation and animal life which now exists. All this is an advance,—it

shows an upward movement of life. It is a process of change from the simple to the complex. And this of itself would show that the process of creation has been an exceedingly slow process; that since it has proceeded from the simple to the complex, therefore there has been a method or law controlling it. In other words, — we do most indubitably find by the aid of geology, that certainly up to a few thousands of years ago creation has been a continuous process. It was all the time a process of change. And the change was from the lower to the higher. So much I suppose is not doubtful to any one who has had the intelligence to examine the matter at all.¹

Now according to the old story of creation, — the story which was told some of us in our childhood, — God appeared upon the scene six or seven thousand years ago, and proceeded to make plants and animals and man, each plant and animal according to a definite species, complete and perfect, and in each species was lodged the power to perpetuate itself to the end of the world. Perhaps it would be a caricature of the notion to say that God selected certain clay, or such material, and out of some of it made horses and dogs and camels, and the like, and set them going. And that He made each complete of its kind. Yet that is substantially the idea of the old story. And after all that was done, God took dust of the ground, and by fiat, or something like it, formed man. If that is what was done, all the preceding process lasting for ages, and proceeding in an orderly manner, upon an ascending scale of life, is suddenly interrupted, and becomes, in fact, of no account whatever.

But there is absolutely no proof that such a thing occurred.

¹ Edward Clodd, *Story of Creation*.

I am perfectly aware that I will be asked by some one if I, as a believer in the Christian religion, have ever taken the trouble to read the first and second chapters of the Bible, which is understood to be the standard of truth to be believed by the Christian.

Well, yes, I have read that account, and with serious attention, and I fail to find in it any warrant for the story which has occupied the ground so long. As Professor Maurice has pointed out, the refutation of the old story of creation lies on the very surface of the first two chapters of Genesis. For after everything has been made, and all well made, so that it is pronounced good, and after man has been placed at the summit of all, we are told in so many words that we are reading the book of the generation of heaven and earth, when they were made, in the day in which the Lord God made them, and every herb of the field before it was in the earth, and all the grass of the field before it sprang up, for God had not rained on the earth, and there was not a man to cultivate it. That is to say, after the creation was finished, and pronounced very good, there was neither grass, herb, nor man. We are therefore forced to the conclusion that in the mind of the writer of this wonderful passage, the first chapter of Genesis gives us the creation in its fullness, as it was in the mind of its Creator, perfect and complete.¹

And then we begin upon the concrete, actual creation in its process. The perfect, as it lies in the Infinite Mind, is to be reached, not at once, as has been assumed, but by a long course of ascending work. Like a palace which, before it is builded, before a shovelful of earth had been thrown out for its foun-

¹ *Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament.*

dation, is nevertheless shown upon the elevation of the architect, a beautiful and perfect structure; so the sacred writer conceives of the creation as complete in the mind of its Architect and Builder, before it is begun (in Genesis i.). And after the work is begun, also like the work of the construction of a palace, there ensues the confusion and the disorder, and the rubbish of the process (in subsequent chapters).

According to the old story of creation, which was based upon no facts, but only upon a misinterpretation of revelation, God made man at one stroke, not as a sculptor makes a statue, not as an inventor makes a machine, but as the magician makes his prodigy. Accordingly, God is no constant and necessary factor of creation, but is a being who may be dispensed with, except for occasional irruptions into our region of space, to perform wonders. Now, in place of such a conception, evolution offers a far nobler one; and produces an array of facts, ever increasing in bulk and significance, to substantiate it. The process of change which goes on generation after generation, and age upon age, is creation. The Creator does not act as a magician, suddenly, as by mere impulse, but as the steady Eternal Energy, and ever according to that purpose which we begin to consider. If we start at some low stage of life, as *e. g.*, the mollusk, in which there is little differentiation of organ, because about the only function of the creature is to absorb nutriment, we pass on to the vertebrate, the creature with a bony structure within its body (in distinction from the crustacean and the insect, with the chitine shell enclosing and supporting the soft parts of the body); we pass on from the vertebrate, whose home is the water, to the reptile, whose

home is the water and the land ; to the bird, whose home is the water, the land, and the air ; to the mammal, whose home is exclusively the land, and whose locomotion is provided for by the possession of four legs ; to the mammal so modified that the function of the anterior legs is changed, by being more and more used as arms ; to the erection of the structure, bent parallel to the surface of the earth, so that it becomes vertical to the surface of the earth, and so we at last meet man, the structure of whose body is the result of a series of modifications extending from the hazy, infinite past, and in whom creation finds its crown and glory. This is the story of creation, which is being told to-day, a story supported by so many facts, that books are hardly numerous enough to chronicle them. And it supplants a story which is like a mist in the morning, as unsubstantial as a dream.

Compare the creation of the horse by orderly process of development, with the same creature perfect at the first. That is, the horse historical with the horse magical. Among the most remarkable of the discoveries on our continent, is that of the fossil ancestor of the horse, as we now see it. The Eocene seas have given up their fossil dead, to be considered by our expert biologists. In the deposit of those seas we are confronted by the spectacle of a creature, about the size of a fox, with four hoofed toes on each foot, and in one form with the rudiments of a fifth toe. These toes indicate the number of digits in the five-fingered hands of mammals.

In the upper Eocene is found the creature with three toes, hoofed, the central one the largest. In the upper Miocene, the two side toes have still farther dwindled. In later forms we find the toes modified

into mere side splints, such as are now found in the anatomy of the leg of the horse. We do not see all the steps of the progress from the fox-like Eocene creature to the splendid animal of to-day, but the links in the chain are being more and more discovered and put together to form the succession of creation. Or, if we take the human hand and trace it back to its earlier stages, we discover it in the forward fin of the fish; in the forward foot and leg of the reptile, which is modified from the fin to suit the conditions of land life; in the wing of the bird; in the forward foot of the five-toed mammal; in the more extended fingers of the anthropoid ape. And there are in various cabinets and museums skeleton forms exhibiting the life series from the fin, with its one simple function, to the hand of man, so complex and perfect in its structure. The most incredulous have been startled by such pictures of creation, painted by the hand of the Creator Himself.

To tell the story of the continuous creation would be a task of practically infinite proportions. One can undertake to do no more than to turn a page or two of the huge book, to note the print thereon, and to read its plain doctrine. And we have now the light of the great hypothesis of evolution, whereby to decipher the otherwise obscure, enigmatic, and long misunderstood handwriting of the Creator.

To some minds, the idea of a process in creation does away with the necessity of a creator. If a tree grows, it grows of itself. If, in the substance of an egg, the speck of life develops from one stage to another, until at the proper time the fully organized bird breaks from the shell, and flies the air, that is not a creative process, but a mere growth, and does

not necessitate the presence of the Eternal Energy. But if any egg were to develop itself, apart from that Energy, then there would be an independent power in the universe ; a power lodged in the egg ; and that power would of itself be a deity. From such a conclusion the mind recoils, and yet it is the sole alternative. Evolution offers, in the place of such confusion, the theory of a creation which ceases not for a moment, a creation which involves the lowest forms of life as well as the highest. And certainly to the Christian believer his great hypothesis of the omnipresence of God renders it unnecessary for him to doubt but that the creative process is as much now as ever the play of a Power infinite and wise, in all departments.¹

Then there are those who are repelled by the notion of a low origin. To come from the dust of the earth by a swift and magical stroke seems to them more dignified than to have come from the dust of the ground by the slow process. Yet the conception of a Creator who is always a Creator, upon whom all life depends, from whom we derive our power, and who goes on from one stage to another of the manifestation of Himself, just as rational minds are prepared to bear it, is so superior to the other conception, that it is difficult to see why the theory of a magic creation should be chosen by any intelligent person.

Man, in his physical structure, has for a long time been at the summit of the process of modification. He is, as a physical being, complete, though not perfect. But the creative process does not stop with the physical : it goes on, with a greater and higher manifestation of energy, in the mind and soul and spirit of man.

¹ Professor LeConte. *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought.*

And the conclusion to which the student of evolution comes is, that this work goes on according to the law of development. Nothing comes into being full-grown. In all departments, from grasses to worlds, and systems of worlds, there is the reign of the one law. And the kingdom of heaven, or the highest ethical and spiritual condition of rational being, cometh not otherwise, for He who announced the coming of the kingdom of heaven said: "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

"That the widening of our conceptions of time, as of space," writes Professor Proctor, "and thence the widening of our ideas as to the domain of law, and consequently the recognition of the infinitely perfect nature of the laws of the universe (for only very excellent laws can work for long, and only perfect laws can work forever) should have been regarded as antagonistic to religion, in its wider and nobler sense, can only be regarded as resulting from the blindness or perversity of the ignorant. But that religion in which all men may (in which all reasoning men must) agree has been rendered infinitely grander, infinitely more impressive by our new knowledge. It has also been rendered infinitely more reasonable. Men had spoken of God as omnipresent and almighty, but they had assigned a mere point in space as His domain: they had described Him as eternal, but they had recognized His influence as existing for the merest second of time; and, finally, they had in words attributed all wisdom to Him, while, in fact, they had limited His wisdom to the provision of laws capable of operating but imperfectly, and for a brief period. Science now shows the infinite domain of the omnipresent, its inconceivably vast duration, the perfection of the laws which so rule it that they operate throughout all space and all time."

III.

"THE IDEA OF GOD."

I DO not attempt to prove the doctrine of evolution. Those who are sufficiently interested to investigate the specific grounds of its adoption by the scientific world, will in any event be compelled to study the works of those who are expert in the matter. The vast majority of those who accept the doctrine do so, not upon careful examination of it in detail, but because the actual investigators inform them that the hypothesis works, as far as it is followed.

In 1820 Banvard, an astronomer, attempted to construct tables of the motion and orbit of Uranus, then the outermost known planet of our system; but he found that he could not account for the motion of Uranus by the attraction of other planets and the attraction of the sun. Either here was an exception to the great universal law of Newton, — or some cause existed for the divergence, entirely unknown. Several astronomers studied the case, without arriving at a conclusion, until in 1846 a young Frenchman wrote to Galle, astronomer at Berlin, asking him to look for another planet, at a certain place in the heavens. This was on the 23d of September. That night Galle pointed his telescope to the place indicated, — and found the planet, and the next night his discovery was made certain. The young Frenchman, Leverrier, had a profound faith in the hypothesis of Newton, and made his com-

putations in accordance with it, — and added to our system a new and magnificent world. It will be seen that the very thing which appeared to be an exception to the universal law, in due time became the most convincing proof of it. Of a true hypothesis, it may be said that it does not shine on the world all at once in its full glory. It gets itself stated, brought thus before the eye of intelligence, and then goes on increasing until its glory fills the earth. Even a hypothesis is no exception to the general law of development. It begins germinally in the mind of some Newton or Spencer, and proceeds to grow.

When it is little in proportion it is laughed at, made the butt of all the shafts of ridicule; then it is viewed in a more serious light, attacked with bitterness, called the enemy of true philosophy and religion; then it is adopted and it proceeds to shine benignly on an ungrateful world. Those who have reached the period of middle life will remember how Darwin's theory was laughed to scorn, and hooted and jeered a quarter of a century ago. And how gradually the laugh was changed to lament and rage. Well, we now come to the last stages of the lament period. The ultra-conservative still declares that evolution undermines true religion; and is the foster mother of all the infidelities. That it promises to abolish God, and utterly consume the Bible in its wasteful criticism. That is the reception usually accorded to new truth, and the reader of the Bible ought not to be astonished at it, for if the Bible shows anything, it shows us that.¹

But how about the lament that evolution abolishes God? To the Christian evolutionist there is perhaps nothing so absurd as that lament.

¹ Isaiah liii. 1; Luke xi. 52; John iii. 19; Acts vii. 51, etc.

If a man were living in a room without windows, a den in the ground, or in a stout enclosure of stone walls, getting all the light he could from a tallow dip ; and if some one should come and knock out the stones of the wall, and should insert ample windows in the proper places, then if he were to blow out the candle, the inmate might complain, "You have taken away my light ! You are cruel to me !" But it certainly is no piece of cruelty to do that. The invader makes a substitution for the feeble light, the perishable light, which has been useful, of the bright and universal light which shall be a thousand times more useful. The sense of damage and loss will soon be lost in the increasing sense of benefit and blessing.

See how the idea of a universe has grown. The ancients knew nothing of it. They knew of the earth almost nothing, and of the sky less. The earth, a small, flat surface, bounded by unknown boundaries ; the sun, as Lucretius declared, the size it appeared to be ; and Olympus (as Greeks thought) a camp or settlement of beings somewhat superior in power (but not in character) to men and women.

The Beyond was hardly a field of conjecture. The total was a small affair, with the earth for the centre of it. The sun was made to shine for man, and the stars to twinkle for him, just as the fruits of the ground were made to feed him, and the flowers to charm him.

The small earth, the smaller sun, the small total, necessarily engendered in the average mind the notion of small deities, whose acts were determined by small and even contemptible motives.

But the accumulating materials of information, and the faith of the few, who stood alone in the world,

gradually broadened the field of thought. Men began to drift away from their deities and their worship. The poets and dramatists began to amuse the populace with lampoons upon the gods. Jupiter was a petty despot and Mercury was his errand boy. The old ideas would not hold, and the new ideas did not furnish ground for a positive reconstruction. At length the idea of a universe began to dawn. The sun receded into space millions of leagues, and swelled into vast bulk. The earth, while it also increased in size to the apprehension of men, sank into a relative insignificance. The sun was seen to spread its beams over other worlds than ours. Men began to think of themselves in a new way, a more humble, and at the same time a more grand way. And then began to emerge new thoughts of God. I would not imply that men had not continued to worship and serve God before; I am merely speaking of man, as philosophizing. One great universal law, governing the fall of a pebble, or the flight of a galaxy of suns, suggested one vast Intelligence, one unspeakable and unsearchable Power. The advance was in philosophy, or the speculative thought of mankind, from the simple, the small, the crude, to the infinitely complicated, the infinitely great, and the infinitely perfect. The rushlight of scanty and dusky ray was stolen away. But the sunlight made it unnecessary.

Thus our human ideas of God have been changing; they have been enlarging; becoming less definite in some ways, but vastly more profound. I suppose you are all familiar with the outline of Paley's celebrated argument, with the illustration of the watch.

Let us now take Paley's watch and the savage person that finds it. The savage person is a thinker, ac-

according to the full measure of his circumstances. He discovers the watch and contemplates the cover of it. He notes that it is of regular shape — he hears the regular tick of it. It also has a shining cover which is likely to attract the attention of a savage person. Well, the first thought of the savage we will assume to be as to the skill of the maker of the thing. Possibly that is a violent assumption, but it is for our present purpose only it is made. He perceives the evidence of something of skill in the man who could patiently make such a shape, and carve the chasing on the covers. He would recognize it as being beyond anything possible in his tribe. But there is the singular noise which the thing makes, — singular because so perfectly regular. That is a mystery. After a while the savage person happens to press his finger on the spring of the cover and it flies open, and discloses the white face, with the figures. Second-hand revolves on its axis, minute hand goes on its axis, more slowly. Hour hand, the astonished savage perceives, has its motion also. Then presently he finds that there is a correspondence between the movements of the hands, and the course of nights and days. By that time he ceases to refer the construction of the watch to any being like a member of his own tribe. He must be a being of marvelous powers, powers which are somehow in concert and agreement with the powers of nature. And in the course of time the curiosity of our savage begets a sort of skill in him, and he contrives to pry open another cover, and with amazement he beholds the complicated arrangement of wheels and other machinery inside. Now he feels that he does n't have much of an idea of the being who could construct such a marvelous thing.

Here are little wheels which mark the pace of that great wheel, the sun, as it rolls over the sky. The savage, who first thought that some person of another tribe had made this large and shining bead, gradually comes to the conclusion, as he pursues his investigation, that no person of another tribe could have done such a thing. And as to what wonderful being actually did it, he becomes more and more an agnostic. As knowledge increases, the sense of ignorance also increases. Now we have seen a wonderful opening of the universe during the past two or three centuries. The universe was observed before, but it was all cased-in to the ancient mind. The boundaries have receded and receded, — have, in fact, entirely disappeared. The firmament which bounded the sky has been rent asunder and has gone. And now we behold the operations of a Being whose proceedings are (some of them) according to now ascertainable methods. We study these methods, and as we do so, the sense of the unspeakable and unthinkable greatness of the Being by whom all things consist grows upon us. It becomes impossible longer to think the thoughts of the ancient man. And as knowledge has increased in our own time, thousands have confessed an ignorance which, perhaps, they did not so much as suspect at first. With an intense meaning and emphasis the old words are uttered, “His ways are past finding out.”

The little earth, the little sun and moon, the little sky, the little time consumed in the making of this little cosmos; its very recent beginning; the prospect of its early ending, have all corresponded with a little theology or science of God, and with feeble, superficial, definite ideas of God. Is it not true that the old

earth, the little earth, and the old heavens, the little heavens, have passed away, as inspired men predicted that they would? And nothing has so facilitated their departure as the doctrine of evolution. For evolution presents to the mind a mighty process: a process of which we cannot say that it had a beginning. This process evidences intelligence and power. The intelligence and power may remain unnamed to the materialist, — that is, the person who assumes, without warrant, the non-existence of God; but to the theist, or the person who does assume the existence of God, as he has warrant for doing, there need be no hesitation in applying to this infinite power and intelligence the sacred name. And what does evolution show the theist? God at work, in the diffused dust of matter, gathering *nebulæ* into fit shape, organizing worlds and systems of worlds, introducing life at its lowest stage, carrying it on by infinitely patient progress up to the highest perfection; never faltering, never changing in purpose, but proceeding through all ages, as the Life of all lives, and Sustainer, Uplifter of all being.

As has been said, the process of evolution is one of change from the lower to the higher, — from the simple to the complex. It may well be that the idea of God working in the lower forms of life, as in the geologic periods, is comparatively easy. But when we reach man, we have come to a very complex and subtle form of life.

The fern has a law, or mode of existence, evidently not self-determined. The fish, the reptile, the bird, have all their modes of existence, quite simple as compared with man. These modes of existence belong to the domain of natural law. But man undertakes to

make his own laws. He is a self-determining being. That is to say, he is free within limits. Of course there are many who deny human freedom. Suffice it to say that if all the facts in the universe were contrary to the notion of human freedom, there would still remain within the mind of the man the conviction that he has a freedom of choice. He cannot explain it, he cannot defend it, perhaps, but he knows it, and that is enough. Now it may be that there is a feeling among men, that if God has wrought and ruled in all the rest of the domain of nature, — when man begins God leaves off. Given a being who can say: "I will do this, or I will do the contrary," and what room have you for God? My friends, you have more room than ever before! Imagine a musician whose purpose it is to produce music. He begins with a hollow reed and sounds forth a note of music. He gets a hole drilled in his reed and produces two notes. He gets six holes and has the octave. He introduces key after key and gets the half tones. Every step that is taken is an advance. He contrives this and that, for his purpose, and at last gets to the human voice. But with the human voice is associated volition. Does he leave off at that point, being blocked by the freedom of the use of the voice? Does he say: "I had some sort of opportunity with my simple reed, or with my reed with the holes in it, or with my other contrivances, but here I have no opportunity at all." On the contrary, he declares that at last he has reached his great opportunity, compared with which all that preceded was as nothing. Here is training to be done. Here at last is the place for the crowning success of his purpose. Ah, but the voice will be discordant, it will be perverse: yes. It will have to be disciplined, educated,

redeemed from the evil of a will opposed to music. That is the supreme labor of the musician. There are the magnificent possibilities. And if your musician is great enough, he will at last succeed.

So far as we have any knowledge, the one medium for the perfect operation of God's will is man's will. And there the process of education, or, if you please, redemption, begins.

Man undertakes to make his laws. He becomes a society, and proceeds as best he may to legislate. Is he a God-forsaken creature when he does that? Has God become an absentee, because the man has very poor success? Why, my friends, wherever man has undertaken anything, for benefit, for rise, for advance, God has moved upon him to do it, as God moved upon and in lower forms. God has ever moved upon all His continuous creation for just those purposes. Your savage makes his crude regulations, the result of his experience. He endeavors after more and better order, and it must be the one ordainer, the one author and inspirer of all order who works in the man's work.

But you will say that man has made imperfect laws, wrong laws, and are they to be attributed to God, of whom we affirm that all His works are perfect? Well, God's works are perfect, *when He completes them*. But, as we have seen, and as the hypothesis of evolution shows, God has been working ever in the incomplete. Human laws grow only out of human experience, and human experience is at best only partial and constantly changing. Moses made laws for Israel. He had the deep insight to declare that they were indeed the laws of God. They grew out of the best of human experience, the experience in which God

had the largest place, therefore. Were they perfect laws?

They had in them the germ and potentiality of perfect laws, but were manifestly imperfect, and have long been superseded, as a body of legislation. Abraham was a polygamist. Human experience had not advanced far enough for him to be able to know or appreciate the law of monogamy. And so all along there were adjustments of the laws to the actual being then being educated and trained.

Men have to find out the evil things, the things which make for hurt, and then they declare against them, as well as they know how.

Individuals are perverse, willful, unteachable; but society — the very society of which they are a part — reaches up toward the best things it can do. It exercises its will and so declares the will of God. We find fault, as well we may, with the inefficiency and insufficiency of our laws. We are not satisfied. God forbid that we should be satisfied. It will be time for that when the best has been reached, not before. But in all outreachings for the better, in all new strivings growing out of dissatisfaction, we do verily behold the pathway of God.

Now, when we are told that evolution abolishes God, or renders Him superfluous, we see, on the contrary, that evolution cannot proceed one step without God. The materialists may declare that evolution proceeds by material energy or force. The agnostic may say that we do not know and cannot know. The theist identifies the Universal Power and Intelligence, proceeding by universal laws, as the Being of whom men have had imperfect intuitions, of whom men have had inspirations.

And to the Christian theist I cannot see how the theory of evolution (when he once begins fairly to apprehend it) can be other than a constant and increasing delight. It certifies him in a new and impressive way of the presence of the Eternal Spirit, rendering all existence essentially sacred. It certifies him that there is nothing of trivial importance, nothing common or unclean, in which there is possibility of betterment. It invests life with the greatest possible meaning, and all the relations of life with the greatest possible dignity.

"When," writes Professor John Fiske, "from the dawn of life we see all things working together toward the evolution of the highest spiritual attributes of man, we know, however the words may stumble in which we try to say it, that God is, in the deepest sense, a moral being."

Some one has written of a cluster of grapes, and what was required for its composition. The soil in which it grew represents untold ages in its formation; the light and heat, which produce the recombination of the elements of matter, in its substance, represent forces which we cannot compute; and the intelligence displayed in its organization, the delicacy of its bloom and flower, is great beyond our utmost limit of thinking. In other words, the infinite protrudes itself upon the attention of the observer, as he contemplates the fruit of the vine.

But in the contemplation of a reasoning being, the man who can think such thoughts of a grape cluster, we reach the culmination of creation.

Here is the being who sees reason in the universe, who sees righteousness in its provisions and adjustments, who may proceed (and in time must proceed)

to the conclusion that he is peculiarly akin, and in the deepest sense, to the Eternal Righteous Being. To him it becomes part of the Divine purpose, from the first, that after much speech of mankind, there should come at last the speech of the Son of God, to apprise men of the Eternal Father, to lead on man to the high destiny of the Sons of God.

In these critical days the doctrine of evolution has been brought close to the thought of men to help them tread the path of the Son of Man, and to live as never before the life of faith and truth.

IV.

THE FUNCTION OF SCIENCE AS RELATED TO RELIGION.

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.”

It is the office of science to consider. Indeed to consider wisely and carefully is science; and such consideration, according to the idea of Jesus Christ, must lead to certain results. These results sum up in one, — an increased apprehension of the presence and beneficent goodness of God.

Two hundred and eighty years ago Kepler published at Prague a book on the motion of the planet Mars, in which he announced a discovery of his own, substantiated by an almost incredible labor of computation. It was this. The planet moves in an ellipse, with the sun at one focus of it. He concluded that the same must be true of every planet. At the same time he declared that a line from the planet to the sun always describes equal areas in equal times.

Nine years later he published another book, in which he set forth the relation between the distances of planets and their periodic times. These are the three celebrated “Kepler’s Laws.” Of the book which promulgated the last of these laws he said: “It may well wait a century for a reader, as God has waited six thousand years for an observer.” Up to the time of this famous discovery, the facts of the heavens had been abundantly observed. There was indeed a copious fund of facts, but there was no science of as-

tronomy worthy the name. And the reason is that a law governing the movements of the heavenly bodies was unknown. Some one has likened the case to this: Materials for a building are gathered together from all parts — stone, wood, iron, glass, everything. But the skill to put them together is lacking. Presently a man comes along who knows the laws which properly govern the construction of a building, and then (but not before) the building rises. With Kepler, the “legislator of the heavens,” as he has been called, the facts began to be builded together into the fair temple of astronomy.

The motion of the planet Mars is readily ascertainable after the law of planetary motion is made out. And so of all the members of the planetary system.

In all departments of thought and research we may observe this: that there may be great accumulation of facts and phenomena; very interesting facts and in many ways practically useful to mankind; yet until some one arises who finds the law of the relation of the facts there is no orderly and beautiful construction of them in harmony.

Nature embraces seven full sounds, as also seven colors, with the semitones and the connecting tints. These sounds exist and men know of them. But it is only after the relation of sounds in chords, such as the first, third, fifth, and eighth of the octave, is discovered that music becomes an available science. Then in time Mozart and Beethoven come to delight the soul of mankind with their art. Men see things, and do not see the law of their relation. The things are more or less helter-skelter in their minds. How the things came to be is unknown, and indeed is considered unknowable.

Then arises some one whose office it is to discover and to publish the law of relation. And thus comes, at length, science, or the application of the law of relation. Mr. Darwin spent a laborious life in biological research, seeking, as did Kepler in the department of astronomy, for the law of relation in the department of biology. His labors were so successful in this department that he was able to announce the law of relation, in time, between the different forms of life. Mr. Spencer, whose office is of an entirely different character from that of Mr. Darwin, went on to the generalization of that which had been so ably demonstrated in the department of biology. He felt convinced that the same law of relation was applicable throughout the whole domain of thought. He formulated the law of evolution, as the universal mode of becoming. And the abundant array of facts, gathered from all time, from the geologic eras, from the history of mankind, from the different grades of animal and human life, began to be builded, for the first time, into an enduring structure of philosophy. It is a philosophy builded upon observation. The law of evolution is applied at every point. It already proves itself to many careful thinkers the most legitimate philosophy ever conceived in the minds of men.

And why should not this philosophy be cordially adopted by all thoughtful persons? In many cases it is not adopted, probably, from the fear that it will overthrow religion. It undoubtedly will overthrow some religion, the religion which has no foundation, but it will destroy no worthy religion. *That* it will bring out, enhance, develop, and throw light upon. Evolution is, as we have seen, the law of relation in time. It is the law of succession or continuity. And

if we think of it carefully we shall see that it has been believed in, for many centuries, partially ; perhaps as long as men have been capable of painstaking observation, the law of evolution has been, as applied to a considerable part of creation, accepted.

The type of all evolution is said to be the egg, and all persons of intelligence are supposed to be familiar with the main facts in the history of an egg. Children know that birds come out of eggs ; they also know that there was a time in the history of the egg when the bird was not in it, because they have broken open an egg and satisfied themselves that there was no bird in it. Permit me to condense a little biology such as you will find in many books. If we take an egg and examine it on the outside, it is of a certain shape, color, and weight. But that is of the least importance to the careful observer. He breaks it open and discovers a mass of albuminous matter, and a yolk. He analyzes this mass, and finds that it is an aggregation of cells, and these cells are similar. He can detect no difference between them. But in due time and under proper conditions there begins a process of differentiation. While at first the cells are alike, and each one performs all the functions of life, afterward the aggregate separates into three distinct layers ; and these three layers, by further process, are found to contain, or form, three groups of functions and organs : the nerve system, the nutrition system, and the blood system.¹

The nerve system has to do with the exchange of force and influence between the outside world and the organism, and between different parts of the organism. The nutrition system has to do with the exchange of matter between the outside world and the organism.

¹ See LeConte's *Evolution*, etc., for fuller exposition.

The blood system has to do with the exchange of matter between the different parts of the organism. And thus that which at first was a mass of units of life (cells), each being as it were bound up in itself, becomes itself a unity, an organism, in which there is a division of labor. Some cells take on a certain form, and become a tissue we call muscle, which tissue performs a certain definite office and can perform no other. Another group of cells becomes nerve tissue, which carries influence back and forth between the great world without and the world of consciousness within. Now all this is a process of which we know, and of which we have known a long time. Whatever inference we may derive from it, however much it may affect our philosophy or our religion, we know that it exists, and not only so, but that all animal life (animal life, of the higher grades, let us say) develops individually from an egg. So that this process of evolution is the most universal process of which we have any conception. It belongs necessarily to the history of every individual; and it was known that this was the fact, long before the evolution hypothesis dawned.

One of the earliest things taught the child in Christian families has been that God made him, and this has been, I have no doubt, a perfectly true teaching; only God made the child in a process such as the evolutionist recognizes as the universal process. And to the Christian teacher, knowing that human life is always developed from an exceedingly low and simple stage, to the fully organized body, with all its beautiful symmetry; to the mind, with its various and subtle powers, to the soul, or moral nature, — it was all true and right to declare that God made not only the race, but

the individual. Well, the child grows on to manhood (that is part of the evolution of life), and it seems never to occur to the Christian teacher to deny that God is the maker of the man, — at any point.

And yet there are those who still maintain that if this evolution is extended, then it takes the place of God, becomes a substitute for God. Why has it not become a substitute for God long ago? There is no more reason for that now than centuries ago.

Take anything that is seen alive on earth. Take a tree. Ask how it came to be. From the Christian standpoint you are answered that God made it. How did He make it? By growth, that is by evolution. Or take a moth of gorgeous wing. A child of a questioning disposition sees it, and asks how it came to be. Who made it? God made it. Well, the child gets a pair of scissors and some tissue paper, and tries his little hand at making a moth, like the one he has seen. His idea is that God makes moths very much as a child would — with a pair of shears. In the autumn the child wanders about, under trees, and finds a cocoon. Brings it home. In the springtime he looks at his cocoon, which he has carefully laid aside in a good place, and he perceives something going on in it. The side or end of it is broken open and some kind of a creature comes out of it. This creature takes its station where it can hang downward, and presently before the eyes of the astonished child there are spread out the very wings he has admired so much. Ah, here is one kind or species of thing coming out of another. He runs to his mother and tells her that she was wrong in telling him that God made the moth, because he has seen a moth precisely like the other come out of the cocoon. Then his mother tells him that God made the

cocoon and all its contents. He wanders out again in the genial springtime and sees a worm feeding on a certain kind of plant, and, after watching for a while, bethinks himself that he will take the worm home and feed it on the kind of leaves it likes, and keep it in a secure place, and see what comes of it. And presently he sees the worm make a cocoon precisely like the one he had found before. Here, then, is another new and troublesome idea. He goes to his mother and says, in a tone of skepticism, which is all the time getting confirmed: "You told me that God made the moth, and after I found out that He did n't, but that it came out of the cocoon, you said that God made the cocoon. And I have found that he did n't make the cocoon, for I saw the worm make it."

The mother says quietly: "My dear, God made the worm." The child ponders that. He takes another ramble, and comes upon a little group of cream-colored objects, like beads fastened to a leaf or twig, or something, and takes them home, determined to watch them.

In due time he sees the little bead-like thing broken, and a little worm emerges. He feeds the little worm upon some leaves, and it grows to be such a worm as he saw make the cocoon. This shakes the little investigator's confidence in the theory of his mother more than ever. "You told me that God made the worm; I know He did n't, for I saw the worm come out of an egg and it grew." "Ah, yes," says the mother, "I told you the truth about it all the while. God made the egg, and He made it in such a way as to produce the worm, and He made the worm in such a way as to weave the cocoon, and the cocoon in such a way as that the winged moth should come out of it."

In process of time the child finds that the egg is laid by the gorgeous winged creature he has admired. His mother must be all wrong about it. "You told me that God made the egg. I tell you that the moth laid the egg. And I can see how it is. The whole thing goes on in a circle. Egg, worm, cocoon, moth, egg. God did n't have anything to do with it." And the mother says, "God does not make things in the way you do. He makes things in His way. Some day I hope you will learn to admire His way, a little of which you have seen." The child grows, and ponders upon the mysteries of life.

He sees everywhere a process. He can refer these processes to an infinitely wise Being, as his mother does, to God; or he can refer them to nothing. There is no reason why he should not refer them to God. Certainly no reason why he should hesitate to refer a process to God, that would not prevent his referring anything whatever to God. There may be plenty of reason why he should change his ideas of God. Indeed it has become impossible for him to think of God as he did, as a great man, using a pair of shears, to cut out wings, and the like; but it becomes possible for him to grow into deeper and grander thoughts of a Being who works by laws and processes to manifest His ways to the children of men.

There is a feeling that evolution is dangerous. The exaggeration of that feeling is that evolutionary philosophy comes as a whirlwind to destroy religion; on the contrary it comes to restore and revive it. People are warned to beware of it. My friends, evolution will prove itself dangerous to the kind of religion which treats it in that way. The religion that seeks to stand on the ground of opposition to light, on the ground of

resistance, will find itself more and more threatened and undermined by it. Suppose the mother should warn her child, after he has found the cocoon, *i. e.*, after he has begun to be an evolutionist, that he must let cocoons alone, that he must take it to be true that God made the moth, and that cocoons are snares of the devil, to entrap unfaithful children to their hurt and ruin. Suppose she tells him that if he finds the cocoon he will be likely to find something still back of that, which will shake his faith in God. She has taken the proper course to land her child in permanent and increasing doubt of anything that she can teach.

Now science, genuine science, has not a word to say about God. It never did have anything to say about God. That is not its office. It deals with things which it can see; it traces them to their causes, but never to their Final Cause. There is another department of thought which has to do with the Final Cause. The child who traced the life-history of a moth was a scientist. He was doing in his simple and childlike way what all the scientific people are doing in their more elaborate way. He was right in his science, but wrong in his philosophy. He was right in saying that God did not make the moth, because he connoted with the verb "make" a kind of shears operation, a manufacture. His mother was perfectly right when she declared that God did make the moth, because she had dispensed with the crude idea of a shears operation. Science shows us how things were made. But no scientific person has a right to tell me who or what I am to refer the making to. If the scientific person tells me that God did not make the things which I see, and gives his statement as a direct teaching of his

science, it is for me to remind him that science offers no such teaching. He has gone out of the domain of science into philosophy.

But what then has science done for us? How does it aid us? Is it so great a thing to know how lilies of the field grow? How rocks disintegrate into sand and soil for them to grow in? What the cosmic periods have been? No. The chief need of man is not met and fulfilled by such knowledge. There is more in a man than nerves and gray brain-matter. Man has ever been seeking after God. Feeling after God, if haply he may find Him. Why? Because he has need of God, to satisfy his highest and best faculties.

But in seeking after God men have found, not God, but very crude, very imperfect, and very untrue concepts. They looked at trees, and imagined ethereal tree-builders as explanatory of them. They looked at fountains, and imagined ethereal fountain makers. They found not God — the One Eternal Source and Centre — but many gods.

Science — the faulty science of the past — gradually cleared away those crudities and idolatries.

But has there been nothing in modern times corresponding to that, and which it was necessary to clear away? Let us see. Have not men, almost inevitably, thought of God as non-resident, as it were, an absentee landlord? Here is the world upon which we dwell; it is to be held in its station, and there are all the spheres likewise to be maintained in position: that is sublet to gravity. The world and all worlds are to be kept compact in form: that is sublet to cohesion. The generations of animals and mankind are to be continued: that is sublet to the law or group of laws which govern in that department. The lilies are

to grow, that is sublet to vital force. In other words, God has been conceived, not as a living present Being, in whom and by whom all things consist, but as a chief marshal of other gods, known as natural laws. That has been the modern form of a polytheism which has held its ground in Christendom. And that is now being superseded. Why? Because the scientific finding of men cannot be contained in that sort of philosophy. The boy who sees the gaudy moth, starts with a philosophy. According to his philosophy, moths are manufactured, out of hand, as with scissors. But when his findings include the cocoon, the worm, and the egg, he is compelled to reconstruct his philosophy.

Men find things; they find those modes of nature they call natural laws. There must be a philosophy ample enough to inhold these modes. That philosophy will utterly discard the notion of polytheism; it is bound to declare that all these laws are but separate manifestations of the one Eternal Energy.

And that is what evolutionary philosophy is doing — what, to a certain extent, it has done. As Professor LeConte has pointed out, it has forced us to an alternative: “Either God is far more closely related with nature, and operates it in a more direct way than we have recently been accustomed to think, or else nature operates itself and needs no God at all. There is no middle ground tenable.” That is to say, modern science, or the recent findings of men, have forced a philosophy which shows us to be in immediate and continual contact with God, or else renders the existence of God unnecessary.

The egg, worm, cocoon, moth series or cycle involves the constant creative act of God, or the cycle is self-created; and that latter is simply unthinkable. The

lily, considered as evolution leads us to consider it, with its seed, its root going downward and laterally, its stalk going up, and unfolding leaf, bud, flower, is a history, and it is, as Jesus saw and said, a history of a divine cycle. God, not some intermediate potency, clothes the grass of the field. He does it in a certain way, according to certain modes, but *He does it*.

The highest function of science, or science as related to religion, is to cause men to find themselves directly related to God. If one is driven by considering, to refer the plant series, the insect series, all of the series of inferior life, to God, as a resident power, how much more shall he refer the human series to One who stands in the closest relation with it; or to recur to the words of Christ, "If God so clothe the grass of the field . . . shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

V.

THE BIBLE A RECORD OF RELIGION'S GRADUAL GROWTH.

“Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.”

No book in the world has had so important and so high a use as the Bible. It is the book which has shined in the minds of past generations, to guide the way of men and women; to make them strong for duty, patient in suffering, upright in life, and resigned in death. It is the one book in which righteousness sounds its admonitions, from beginning to end. It is a book in which the divine character is set forth as pure, free from human passion, and centred in love and benevolence. The best thoughts of men are expressed in the Bible,—and the best thoughts, best actions, best motives and feelings of men have been made possible by the Bible.¹

Since the Reformation, theories in regard to the nature of the Bible have sprung up. Before the Reformation the church loomed up portentously, the supreme arbiter of men's thoughts and beliefs; the vicegerent of God, having in her hands the keys, and closing or opening the doors of heaven to men. That was the great authority.

The reformers disallowed that authority, or transferred it. They declared the Bible to be the supreme arbiter of men's beliefs and actions. And naturally

¹ H. W. Beecher, *Inspiration of the Bible*.

there grew up theories as to the constitution of the book. The old claim of the church that she was inspired, — that in her dwelt the Spirit of the Highest, — and that therefore her decisions were to be held final in all matters coming under her supervision, was contradicted. The Bible was the infallible rule of faith and practice. It was inspired as a whole, and inspired in all its parts. The various books of it, — the chapters of the books, the verses, the words, were inspired and infallibly true. This notion grew up to meet the exigencies of the case. If we will soberly think of it we shall readily see how this theory was bound to work confusion in the minds of all its adherents. How it would compel them to believe, or to suppose that they believed, mutually irreconcilable statements. It would compel them to adopt the early, the crude and infantile experiences of the race, as of equal value with the later and mature. The result of such a theory of inspiration has necessarily been to make people reverent of the book in such a degree as to be in fact superstition and idolatry. When men say of a book that it is perfect, faultless, or infallible, they make it represent God to them ; they are compelled to render it the kind of close adherence, homage, which we call worship. And on the other hand, one who discovers actual fallibility in the book, who has been taught that its worth lies in its infallibility, will turn away from it. He will say of it as the reformers said of the church : “ If it claims to be the infallible revelation of God, it claims that which is not true ; it is an imposition.” So that the result of such a theory of inspiration, on the one hand, is idolatry, and on the other, infidelity.

This theory of an infallible book is more destructive

of the book itself than any other which could be devised. It blots out the two thousand years of human experience which intervene between the completion of the book and our time as of no value. It reduces God to silence now ; and in His place sets up the book, to do all the speaking for God which is done.

What is the Bible ? It makes its appearance before us as a book. Let us examine it as we would examine any fact or phenomenon. As we examine it, we discover that it is unlike any other book of which we have knowledge in several respects. Generally a book is the work of a single mind, or a group of contemporary minds. Our books of poetry, of philosophy, of science, of story, represent the time, and society, in which they were written. Our books of history are prepared by some one who has some kind of philosophy of history. We have no book whose authorship stretches over a period of ten or fifteen hundred years, except the one. Taking up ancient books, in Homer you will find one method ; in the Koran there is one molding hand. The Bible is not a book, therefore, in the ordinary acceptance of the term ; it is a library. It is the product of many minds ; and these minds range from the primitive, the immature, to the matured. This library which we call the Bible includes many different kinds of literature, poetry, philosophy, legend, tradition, parable, biography, history ; but, above all, and as the centre of all, religion. It is a record of the lives and thoughts of people of a remote time, and of a remote place. But that which is chiefly remarkable about it is, that it chronicles the growth and advance of mind and moral character from one stage and age to another.

It is, above any other collection of writings, the

record of the evolution of the highest religion of mankind.

A conception of the library (by the Jews called the Scriptures or writings, and by us the Scriptures or the Bible) was held by those who were among the writers of the later portion of it, and notably by the Apostle Paul, who probably contributed as much as any one to the New Testament portion. This conception differs radically from that announced by the theorists since the Reformation. Were the question asked, "How came the Scriptures into existence?" some Jews would possibly answer, "They were dictated to selected men, who acted as the amanuenses or clerks of God. The Scriptures are of a purely miraculous character. The eternal God spoke to men, as men speak to each other, and they wrote down what He said." That also seems to have been the notion of some Christians, and to be the notion of some Christian people now. Paul spoke of the sacred writings, meaning the Hebrew Scriptures, as profitable for several purposes; he was glad that the young man Timothy was familiar with them. He went on to say that all writing inspired of God (God-inbreathed) was of profit for discipline in righteousness and the like. This has been read as if the apostle said that all Scripture was inspired.

He does not say that. He simply speaks of God-inbreathed writing as profitable. That is a statement that commends itself to the candid mind. The other does not. For there are things written in the Bible which by common consent are not profitable for discipline in righteousness. Thus is furnished a test. That which is profitable for discipline in righteousness is God-inbreathed. For all of our practical purposes, that is all that is necessary. I never heard of any one

who desired encouragement and stimulation in the Christian virtues, in the righteousness of patience, benevolence, and justice, who felt drawn to the 109th Psalm. I conceive that one desirous of proceeding in the path of Jesus must recoil from a writing which expresses — as that does — the vindictive feelings of a man toward his neighbor, and even toward the innocent wife and children of that neighbor. On the other hand, it might be read with a degree of satisfaction by one who wished some justification for his own unholy feelings of hatred and revenge. For my part, I look upon the Scriptures as the source of great light, but there are spots on the sun.

Or take the conception of the Apostle Peter. I suppose that the question must have occurred to many at different times, "Why did the men of old write the things which we find recorded? How were these truths communicated to them?" Peter answers that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. I beg you to recur to certain fundamental principles of the evolutionary philosophy. As we have seen, science takes the facts and phenomena of nature, and refers them to ascertainable causes, but back of these ascertainable causes it does not and cannot go. Philosophy refers these facts and phenomena to the Eternal Energy, without which nothing is possible. Is an egg developed from being a mass of similar cells to a complex living organism? Philosophy declares that the resident energy working to such ends is a manifestation of the Eternal Energy. There is no process separate from that Energy. But we are in the habit of distinguishing between different kinds of energy. There is physical energy, intellectual energy, moral energy. In creation, we see along lines of geo-

logical development the impress of that which, for distinction, we may call physical energy. We see this physical energy rising in scope and complexity. Of the plant, or fish, or the lower mammal, we do not say that we discover in them a manifestation of moral energy. But when the period arrives for the appearance of a being acting by volition, then has come the time for moral distinctions. Does the Eternal Energy, which was at no point absent before, become absent from this highest form of life? On the contrary, is there not now a manifestation of the Eternal Energy on a new plane? It makes little difference what words you employ, if you succeed in conveying your idea. I speak of the Eternal Energy, because the term properly belongs to philosophy. After ages of the outplay of Eternal Energy, in the physical mode, there comes into being Man, to be carried on in a new order of development. Here at last is the creature in whom the structural, physical change is not to be prosecuted farther. The change is of an intellectual, moral character. He has inherited the gross animal nature; it is needful that he be moved on, in the exercise of moral freedom, to the expansion and growth of a spiritual nature. Then comes in the manifestation of the Eternal Energy (to use the phrase of philosophy) in moral and spiritual discipline, development, and illumination. Individuals, families, tribes, races, best fitted for this moral discipline, now begin to manifest in a higher way the power of the Being who creates all things, and without whom nothing is made that is made. Or, transfer the idea into the language of Peter: "Men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." The very reptile, endeavoring after a more extensive existence, and putting forth motion

thereto, did so, in the far past, as moved, borne along, not by its own separate energy, but by the Eternal Energy. Holy men, men most apposite to the purpose, the most fit men, spake. Did they speak because they were commanded to speak by a Being altogether separate from themselves? Did they act as a kind of vocal mechanism? Nay, but because the same Being who had moved upon all orders of creation, in a way fit for those orders, now moved upon them in a way fit for them. The word employed by Peter, "moved," suggests a current, bearing along the mental and moral life of men. You may call it what you please; you may call it a "stream of tendency," if you like; whatever you call it, it is the movement of the Eternal Energy. And it is an ascending movement. It goes from the inorganic to the organic; from the lower physical to the higher physical; from the higher physical and the more intelligent to the moral and spiritual. It takes man in his initial brutehood, and carries him along through savagery, barbarism, civilization, to the highest thinkable spiritual and intellectual attainment, or to the kingdom of heaven. There is no interruption of the order, there need be none, for the order itself is one of ascension and expansion. Revelation, as I look at it, is no abnormal thing; it is involved in the very constitution of man and nature. God is involved, if I may so speak, in every movement of life, but is chiefly manifested in the highest movements of life. The power of thought is of God, the faculty of speech is of God. The fittest men will speak forth the most fit thoughts of their time. They will thus speak forth what God is doing, creating in their time. The least fit men will speak little or nothing to the purpose. And so if examination is

made, so far as it can be made, it will be seen that from of old men have spoken in a more or less crude and infantile way of God. Some men in each nation will prove the most fit. Some race, or nation, among other races and nations will prove the most fit. But that any man or nation should perfectly speak forth the truth, the whole truth, without admixture of human frailty and mistake, necessarily implies that the man or nation so speaking is perfect. I have the right to hold, indeed it is required of me that I should hold, that the most fit nation for speech of God was of Semitic origin ; that the branch of the Semitic root most fit for the purpose was the Abrahamic ; that of the seed of Abraham the most fit was the Israelitish, etc. The logic of events has made the conclusion all but inevitable. I do not say, neither do I think, that God's Spirit did not move upon other races, and branches of them. I do not say, neither do I think, that at any point other races and nations were abandoned of that Power by which all creation is carried on. But the most fit was without doubt the house of Jacob. It has proved itself true that in the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth have been blessed, directly or indirectly, because it is out of that root has come the civilization which is by all of us acknowledged to be the best so far.

But this Abrahamic race would have been utterly unfit for its work if it had had nothing in common with the other races ; if it had been raised to such superiority over all others that it shared nothing of their modes of thought. Do the records show us anything more clearly than this : that Israel was often perverse, unteachable ? That it was often sunk in the very vices and idolatries against which it was raised up to

protest? Does it show us anything more clearly than that the most fit men in it were men of intermittent devotion to truth and righteousness? That a perfect and infallible revelation of truth should have come through such a channel seems a baseless superstition. Let us be careful to observe that in the ancient times the existence of an exact science was impossible. Men had not sufficiently observed the processes of nature to enable them to speak discriminatingly of its laws. Their imagination was not yet trained in the school of experience, and therefore they do not make distinction between fancy and fact. We find that true of all primitive nations. If we take the story of the garden, in which the race had its beginning, the idea of it is not peculiar to Israel; it seems to have been the co-inheritor with other nations of that beautiful legend. The story is told of a woman formed of the rib of a man; this story must have descended from a very remote antiquity, by tradition. If Israel had failed to record in its sacred literature the story which it inherited from the past, it would have failed to give record of the belief which it shared with others. The story is told of the woman and the serpent, the serpent being a beast of the field, endowed with speech, and tempting the woman. The idea of it is a truth, not altogether unlike that conveyed in the Laocoön group, of man tempted by that which is most earthy and subtle, to be himself earthy and subtle, and therefore to die. The form of the story is so manifestly legendary that no student would mistake it for anything but legend if found in any other collection of ancient writings. The truth came in that form, but the form, when subjected to the threshing of criticism, becomes a sort of chaff, not necessary to maintain as

of sacred character. As well declare that a divine revelation will have no poetry in it, no parable, as that it must be destitute of legend and myth. As well say that human language is the perfect channel of ideas which have not yet been formed in the human mind, as to claim that a divine revelation has no imperfection in it. Men are all the time moved upon by the Spirit of God, and in all departments. But they do not do their work perfectly, neither do they speak words of perfect wisdom.

What is the use of a revelation? To tell us of God, and His universal, unsearchable greatness and purpose? To disclose the blazing Infinite to the trembling finite? No, but to disclose the work and purpose of God in time, in our own world, in the movements and development of human beings. That is the revelation we need. But there are many who declare that we must have an infallible standard; that, or we have nothing. For the things which we think, and the feelings we feel, especially the deepest of our thoughts and feelings, we require infallible statements. Well, a great many people have held that the Bible was altogether a book of infallible statements. Anything found in the Bible is true even if it is n't true. But have believers in the Bible, in this sense, come all to sweet concord and unison? They must have done so, upon the theory of an infallible standard. On the contrary, since the idea of an infallible standard came, how very divided Christendom has become. There has been less of certainty than of almost anything, since certainty was supposed to be furnished.

The Protestant church has gone to fragments upon the doctrine of an infallible standard. The Calvinist takes the standard in his hand and belabors the Ar-

minian, who has the same infallible standard in his hand. The churchman is against the dissenter; the immerser against the sprinkler; the pre-millennialist against the post-millennialist; the ritualist against the non-ritualist. All have the same standard. The notion does not appear to work well.

The philosophy of evolution suggests a very different conception of revelation. It is also the philosophy of common sense, as applied to the case. It sees that out of the crude and simple ideas of people with respect to God arise greater and greater ideas as time and experience go on. It says that the infant cannot talk so wisely as the same person grown to maturity. It says that the Mosaic must needs give place to the Christian. And it shows us how to look at the earlier feelings and philosophies of mankind. It teaches us to exercise discrimination. It leads on to the feeling that the revelations of the past, in the nature of the case, must be contributory to fuller revelations in the present. Why is it that preachers preach? Why not read the Bible to the people? Is it not because preachers instinctively feel the necessity for the expansion of the testimonies of holy men of old, and their interpretation in terms of present life? Is it not because the light and development of recent times must add their contributions to all written words, or the words become dead and ineffective?

The word of the Lord came to Isaiah, to Hosea, to Amos. They so declare, and I believe them. That word did not come to them independently of other words which had come to their predecessors, but partly as a farther development of those other words, and many words which had been spoken they did away with. See how very particular in detail the old law of

sacrifice was. There was a tabernacle and temple etiquette of the most rigid character. Nothing was permitted to be spontaneous and off-hand. There were to be sacrifices, plenty of them, and every reader of the Bible has noticed with what precision they were conducted. There were particular sacrifices for particular days, and particular persons were to do the work. There were sin offerings, peace offerings, freewill offerings. Everything was prescribed, even as to how the sacrificed animal should be anatomically divided, and where the parts should be put ; what parts burned, and what parts not. The flour and oil were accurately measured. And there were hosts of things which people do not find time and patience to read. In the midst of these prescriptions were inserted directions about leaving the gleanings of field and vineyard to the needy ; and against stealing, cheating, and lying. There was the ethical part, small, and the ceremonial part, large. Now hear one of the later prophets speak. He first asks the question : " What doth the Lord require of thee ? " An unwise man would answer, " Sacrifices ; and all done by the old regulations." He would forget the directions about gleaning, cheating, and lying. But the prophet boldly says : " No, the Lord requires of you nothing of the kind. He requires of you just those ethical things which you have made no account of, namely, to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." The prophet of Israel looked upon the great mass of that Levitical matter as so much chaff, in which grains of wheat had grown. He rubs off the chaff and casts it to the winds, and brings out the wheat grains.

The word of the Lord is the food of the soul of man. But in all departments food comes to us by

growth, and with the growth there is always a great deal of stuff not good for food. The farmer harvests his wheat; he brings it into his barn. After a time you see a huge stack of straw rise beside the barn. That straw has served its purpose in the growth of the food, but now it is put aside. That which is extraneous, light, temporary, goes. The wheat, disengaged from its envelopments, becomes bread. The thoughts of men, the ability to have thoughts, come from God. But the thoughts of holy men partake of the age in which they live; which age, indeed, God creates, but as a step toward a greater and better age to follow. And so the thoughts of holy men of old, who were moved by the Holy Spirit, are to be harvested, the straw and chaff left, the grain cherished, and put into the thoughts of the next age. It was thus the Christ began His great mission, with His fan in His hand, to separate between the truth and its old-time covering.

To reconcile the old concepts of truth with the new has been attempted time and time again, but without success. To reconcile the truth of the past with the truth of to-day is not difficult. If we consider that the Bible is a growth, an evolution, and is to be studied in the light of that fact, it will cease to be a stumbling block to thinking men; its letter will be less regarded, and its spirit will shine upon the world as a light to all who seek righteousness.

VI.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.

“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man ; but I see a different law in my members warring against the law of my mind.”
— ROM. vii. 22, 23.

THE philosophy of evolution renders necessary a reconstruction of many opinions which have commanded the assent of the religious portion of Christendom, and among other opinions, those which relate to the subject of sin. It doubtless appears to many that a modification of the old ideas of sin will cause a weakening, if not a breaking down, of the sense of moral responsibility. And it is to be admitted that a reduction of the sense of responsibility is not a thing in any wise to be desired. To increase that sense, and make it more mandatory than it is, or has been, would seem to be desirable. At the same time it must be confessed that the notions which have prevailed on the subject of sin have not proved satisfactory to the mind of thoughtful persons. Perhaps nothing has been so troublesome to thinkers as the problem of evil. Why should there be evil? If God is the perfectly wise Being, the infinitely powerful Being, and the infinitely good Being, having the welfare of His creatures at heart — why was evil permitted? The Epicurean objection to the existence of God (cited by Lactantius) was that an infinitely powerful and good Being would not have permitted evil. And since there is evil, very manifestly, there is no infinitely

powerful and good Being. That is a very troublesome proposition. It has proved troublesome to multitudes who have felt the force of evil, and have vainly sought some explication of it.

Take the old standard theory of creation: God made man a short time ago, and made him all at once, a full-grown being. This full-grown being was endowed with all the faculties which we know him to possess. The first thing this highly endowed being does is to do wrong. The very first opportunity he has of making a moral choice he improves by making a wrong choice. Now the question arises: "While God was creating man in this summary manner, why did He not do the work so well that the man would not prove a failure at the very first attempt to do anything?" I am aware that such questions have been looked upon as irreverent; but no question is irreverent which is honest and expresses a genuine feeling of difficulty. If a clock-maker makes a clock he may produce a very poor timepiece; but if he does we assume that he is not sufficiently skillful. If he makes a clock which, when wound up and set going, does not strike the right hour and does not point its hands to the right figures on the dial, we arrive at unfavorable conclusions respecting his ability to make clocks. Or suppose a magician can cause a palace to come into existence by some immediate and magical stroke. It will be reasonable to expect the palace to be a success, as not being surrounded with the rubbish which environs a building put up by the ordinary process. It ought not to fall down at the first wind that blows. Otherwise we shall think that magic is not desirable. If God created man at a stroke or by a fiat, as has been dreamed, it makes the existence of evil a far

harder thing to account for than if we conceive that God works and creates through growth, through development and education.

Contrast the old theory of the origin of evil with that furnished or made necessary by the doctrine of evolution. According to the former man was a complete being when he started upon his career. Not only was he endowed with all needful physical and mental faculties, but he was fully endowed morally. He was a free being, and his Maker placed him in the garden of Eden to proceed as he should choose. His Maker arbitrarily decided that if the man did well, all the race descending from him should likewise do well, and be a happy and blessed race; but if he should do ill, then his descendants should at once fall, in him, to be an unhappy and accursed race. That was the dire alternative. All was left dependent upon the decisions of the one man. God lets the condition of millions of moral beings, uncounted throngs of them, depend upon the one act of one finite being. If any one objects to that, he is guilty of objecting to that which God in His infinite wisdom chose to do. If any one protests that it was a great risk, he is told that he must not criticise the Most High.

But such an idea gives an unfavorable notion of the divine government, whether one asks questions or not. It suggests that if God made man so perfectly, to begin with, He would exercise His power still farther in guarding this perfect creation from any temptation which would ruin it. The protection of such a being, against the guile of the serpent, was certainly necessary, at least until such time as the man had become so confirmed in righteousness as to be able to refuse the solicitations of the tempter.

When you think of the sins and sufferings of mankind; when you consider the vices and crimes, the groans and tears, the blood shed on ten thousand battlefields, to say nothing of the miseries which people have inflicted upon each other in particular, at every moment of time; when you see the slaveries, the hard and helpless labors and poverties, and all the bulk and intensity of evil in the history of the race, it is hard to think that all this arose out of the yielding of one man, and that man not a trained and disciplined man, but an inexperienced man, to the first temptation which came in his way. When there is added to this, that God foresaw it all, knowing that the man would fall, and that he would bring hideous ruin upon a world, you have the problem of evil reduced to its most difficult form.

As substantiating this terrible theory, we have the teachings of a theology purporting to be derived from revelation. The basis of that theology is the fall of man from the state of innocence in which he was created, involving the ruin of the race springing from him. "By Adam's act of disobedience he incurred for himself and all his posterity the penalty of spiritual death, to be followed in due course by physical death, and afterward by eternal death, which latter has been understood to mean endless existence in torment."¹

As a partial remedy for the evil caused by the fall, the complex plan of salvation, known as Christianity, was introduced. This remedy does not offset the failure to creation occasioned by the fall, being sufficient only for a limited portion of the race. And all this is supposed to be founded on revelation.

A clergyman of the Church of England¹ has been

¹ Prebendary Row.

at pains to examine revelation with reference to this matter, and has found what an exceedingly slender foundation it affords to such a stupendous superstructure. After the account of the garden and the temptation is given, in the third chapter of Genesis, the subject is not so much as hinted at in any portion of the Old Testament. The illuminated men who were moved by the Holy Spirit to speak from God do not speak one word upon that important subject which has been held to be the foundation of Christian theology. That is a most singular omission, if the doctrine is a true one, and especially if it is an important one. Then, after the lapse of centuries, arose One who came as the Supreme Witness, to speak to men of sin and salvation. And He fails to affirm the doctrine of the fall to be the foundation of His own mission, not only, but He does not directly refer to it in the whole course of His teaching. Not one of the men who followed Him in His work and mission ever speaks of the fall. It may be asserted that all of these take the fall for granted; but it is incredible that they should fail to give even an indirect reference to that which was the foundation of all their teachings. And we have nothing to do with their assumptions, in any case. The Apostle Paul makes four allusions to the third chapter of Genesis; one in the Epistle to the Romans, two in the Epistle to the Corinthians, and one in a letter to Timothy. The allusion in the First Epistle to the Corinthians ("As in the Adam all die, even so in the Christ shall all be made alive") does not bear upon the doctrine of the fall in any way. The one in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians proves nothing. The one in the letter to Timothy says nothing of the fall. The one in the

Epistle to the Romans is the famous passage (v. 12-21) which has been such a ground of debate among theologians, that persons not theologians have mostly let it alone. Of this passage Prebendary Row remarks, "It bears a far closer resemblance to the theory designated universalism than to the popularly accepted doctrine respecting the consequences of the fall." And the conclusion to which this very careful writer comes is this: "The affirmation that Christianity is based on what is commonly designated the doctrine of the fall is destitute of all support in those Scriptures which constitute our only records of revelation. It requires to be read into them before it can be found therein."

In many directions men have sought deliverance from the profound difficulties connected with the problem of evil. The doctrine of the fall of man has added indefinitely to those difficulties. It certainly will be a gain if that doctrine is eliminated from the Christian religion. The stains which have gathered on human conceptions of the divine government will vanish if it can be seen that God did not deliver over the destinies of the vast multitudes of earth's populations to the feeble hands of one man, and that man an infant in experience and wisdom.

To an evolutionist, who sees in evolution the one method of the divine creation, any such doctrine as the fall of the human race from a preceding state of moral excellence is like the vision of a dreamer, whose mind is all confused and his thoughts incoherent. That a man and a woman, placed in a garden of delight, should be tempted to yield to the solicitations of evil, that such yielding would be sin, that it would have the effect of degrading those who yielded to sin, that it would produce ill both for the persons them-

selves and for their descendants, the evolutionist would not think of denying. He knows that men do continually yield to the demands of imperious and subtle earthliness; that whenever men consent to this temptation of that which they recognize as beneath them, they go down to a lower level. He knows that the evil effects of conduct are not confined to the perpetrators of the wrong, but go also to others, and become part of the heritage of their children. But that the human race started at a summit of moral excellence, and immediately proceeded to go down hill, or that in the person of the head of the race did immediately fall down from the summit of excellence to the bottom of depravity, he does not for a moment credit. On the contrary, he thoroughly knows that the human race has been following an ascending pathway from the first. Not all of the race, but that portion of it which shows forth chiefly the creative work of God. He declines, as a conscientious man must decline, to admit for a moment that savagery or barbarism is the equal of civilization. Pursuing his investigations in the antiquities of human society, he finds a time when men were without a literature, and with the most limited language. The language consisted of a few sounds and signs, or gestures. Ideas were corresponding. Like the beast of the field man was necessitated to procure food, and the main channel of his energy was in the direction of finding food. A being of that order has but the simplest rudiments of moral ideas. Such a being yields to the same impulses which govern in the animal creation. In process of time he acquires a perception of moral distinctions,¹ very

¹ How a man acquires perception of moral distinctions we are not at present concerned to show. Whether it is that the painful

faint indeed, but of exceedingly high value. For it is this perception of moral distinction which is to deepen and widen, and grow more and more distinct, until it shall contain and govern the whole field of man's energy. And therefore every step taken is a step in advance. It may well be that the steps are very small, and very slowly taken, but as we glance over the pages of history, if we are unable to perceive the advance, we must be very destitute of optical faculty. The plow of Abraham may have been a sharp stick, and his travels may have been prosecuted by the aid of the camel. From that to the steel gang-plow of the Abraham of our West, cutting its smooth swath of furrows, and to the great trains of steam wagons which carry his harvests to the markets of the world, there is a vast change for the better. It unmistakably indicates an advance. And not only an advance in facilities for the production of food, but a moral advance.

That this moral advance has kept pace with material progress let our great systems of charity, our abundance of literature of the higher class, our feeling of opposition to ambitious wars, our endeavors to provide wholesome laws, our growing intolerance of vice and crime and of various forms of corruption testify. In

is avoided, and the causes which produce it are felt in some sense as wrong, and the pleasurable is sought, and the causes which produce it are felt to be in some sense right ; and whether it is thus the perceptions of moral distinction arise ; or whether they arise in some other manner, does not really affect the proposition of the opponent of the evolutionary philosophy, that God is the creator of the moral sense. In that proposition the theistic evolutionist is at one with the conservative. The question is not " Who created the moral sense ? " but " Was it by fiat, or by process ? " The evolutionist of course holds that it was by process.

the nations where there is the most skill in the production and use of machineries, and the greatest power of invention, where there is the most social and political liberty, there is the greatest moral and religious advancement. It is true that in all communities there is corruption, both private and social, and political, but it does not exist unrebuked; it is subjected to the keen censure of the worthiest of mankind, and that continually.

It is said that the most interesting and instructive department of biology is that of embryology. It is found that the embryo repeats the biological history of the species to which it belongs. That fact is now accepted as one of the general laws of evolution. The young of the frog is not a reptile, but is of the fish kind. It is essentially a fish. It is a tail-swimming creature, and breathes by gills instead of by lungs. If it did not pass on in development it would be recognized as a fish. But it does pass on, forming first one pair of legs, and then another, and it begins to breathe partly by lungs and partly by gills. The lower forms of amphibians remain permanently in this condition. But the young of the frog passes on. Its gills gradually dry up as the lungs develop, but it still retains the tail. Finally the tail is absorbed, and the perfect or adult frog presents itself. This frog has in a short time repeated the history of ages in itself. It has risen, swiftly risen, stage by stage to its final place in the series. The biologist sees in this condensed process the life-history of races. In the Devonian and Upper Silurian of the geological eras fishes appear of an amphibian form. In the Carboniferous the amphibian proper, represented by the second form of the young frog. In the Permian and Triassic the *caduci-*

branch, the third form of the young frog. In the Tertiary, the *anoura*, or the frog like. Thus the race history is put in this form of abridgment. In every species the track of development which it has followed through ages is marked with more or less distinctness in the path followed by the embryo and the young of the species. The human embryo is thus found to discover our kinship with lower races. But the newly born child is at a low stage of physical power, at a still lower stage of intellectual power, and shows no signs of moral perceptions. A helpless little bundle of life, it starts along its pathway of experience. It begins to show to the keen-eyed parents signs of intellectual activity. At first its language is akin to that of the young of animals, inarticulate. It slowly comes to articulation, gets together its little vocabulary, and has a language peculiarly its own. And as time goes on it begins its course of volition. It ascends to the wondrous point of distinguishing between good and evil. At that point it stands preëminent above all unmoral creation. It wishes to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is tempted so to do, drawn on by irresistible impulse. Does it ever resist this temptation? Is the child ever content to do that which it knows to be right, and to follow on to refuse that which it knows to be wrong? Such a child is foreign to our experience. If there is a child who approaches such a standard, the sad parents expect its early translation to a higher world. Now the child repeats in small the history of its race. The race began unenlightened, unmoral, and therefore without moral responsibility. Little by little it came on toward enlightenment, toward the appreciation of the distinction between right and wrong, and therefore

toward responsibility. Were the old theory, founded upon the fall of man, to be carried to its logical conclusion, it would absolve man from responsibility. On the contrary evolution sees the constant increase of responsibility coming with the increase of light. It does not attach moral responsibility to the little child, but it knows that responsibility will begin; that it will progress with the advance of the child, just as it has begun and progressed with the advance of the race.

Our race began high, as compared with that which had preceded it; it began low as compared with what it is now. That is the commanding position which evolutionary philosophy occupies with respect to the problem of evil. But it follows, then, does it not, that evil, or sin, has a necessary place in the history of the human race? That it is not incidental, and could not have been avoided? Yes, that follows. But that does in no wise absolve any moral being from responsibility, as we have seen. In a way, evil may be traced back to its roots, in the earlier stages of creation. Self-preservation is a law of existence. By reason of the power of that law the animal seeks to escape from something. From what? From that which threatens its existence. It finds the food-supply cut off in the locality which it occupies, and undertakes a migration to a more favorable locality. The condition which reduces or withdraws its food-supply is an evil. Of course the word is depleted of all moral significance in such a use of it. There is an evil against which an individual or a species must struggle. It is along the line of this struggle creation proceeds on its ascending pathway. When man appears upon the stage, a moral being, the evil assumes a moral character. And in fact, from that point on the creation is

of a moral sort. It proceeds by the struggle of man with the evil he finds in his environment. Had the Creator of the Cosmos purposed a race of innocent beings, they might perhaps have been created at once, without any preparation. There would have been no necessity of pain and evil; but the beings so made would be animals, or perhaps vital mechanisms. If immortal they would be perpetual-motion machines, as destitute of the quality we call virtue as so many white pigeons. Even more destitute, for white pigeons do make something of a struggle. But the evidence of such a purpose is lacking. On the contrary, the Divine purpose, so far as we can trace it, has wrought steadily toward the being who in the struggle against evil would acquire virtue. And here is the prime glory of the creation.

Man struggles against the disorder incident to his creation. He learns to believe that to achieve character must be worth all the struggle involved, — as the housebuilder believes that the completed structure will amply compensate for the litter and rubbish of the process by which it came into existence.

The earth upon which we dwell is beautiful in spots. Were the conditions favorable it would all be beautiful. The beauty and fertility of the earth depend upon the soil, in which are the roots of trees and plants. There are those who seem to despise the ground and call it dirt. Very well, let it be taken away; then where are we? The verdure and glory of the earth have departed. The man of science does not talk about dirt, he has no disparaging reflections to cast upon that which is so essential to our welfare. He knows that the energies of the ground are taken up into forms of loveliness and usefulness. Our nature

is not simple, it is composite, — as it were, stratified. There is that of us which is earthy, animal ; there is that of us which is moral, spiritual. And we have been told for fifteen or more centuries that our nature is essentially corrupt, sinful. That notion has driven multitudes into seclusion from the world, to whip and persecute and destroy their bodies. They practiced a slow suicide. Why should our natures be deemed corrupt? I suppose because it was seen that sin was universal. But our nature is the sublime work of God's creation. God made our bodies by a process, the magnitude and delicacy of which we cannot imagine. That of material organization which was most fit to survive has in them survived. By what right do we assume to despise them or speak ill of them? Our intellectual powers are of such an order that the weakest of them might occupy our admiring contemplation forever. Our moral nature, including the conscience, is something before which the very stars of heaven grow pale and lustreless. It is a mistake to call this magnificent product of Infinite Wisdom, this combination of physical, mental, and moral powers, a corrupt thing. There is no ground for it. Whence then comes the sin of mankind? From this: from the lack of control of our higher over our lower faculties.

Suppose you imagine one man divided into three men: the animal man, the intelligent man, the moral man. They are now three separate beings instead of one. They occupy a place abundantly furnished with all things necessary for life, happiness, and well being. But everything depends upon which one of these three is in control. If the animal man is at the head of the community, the place will be one of utter confusion and lack; if the intelligent man is supreme,

there will be a reign of cunning and treachery ; but if the moral man is in command, peace, happiness, and well-being are assured. Now the youngest and the weakest of the three, in the order of evolution, is the moral man. Beginning an infant, the moral man struggles with the animal man, a giant. But the growth of the moral man is rapid. He acquires strength by reason of the struggle ; and it is along the line of that struggle you can trace the sin of the world. The animal man is innocent of moral wrong ; the intelligent man is not sinful ; the moral man centred upon conscience is as God made him ; but it is in the ill-adjustment of the three the sin of mankind demonstrates itself. Men are tempted to be controlled by the faculties and forces of their animal natures. To yield to such control is sin and disaster. They are tempted by their intelligence to be cunning and subtle in their relations with each other. To yield to such control is sin and disorder. They are commanded by their moral nature, in which God speaks to them, to order their conduct by the law of right ; to yield to that control is life and peace.

It is the strengthening and development of this highest element which constitutes the present history of creation. It becomes the high and continuing duty of every one to refuse the solicitations of his lower nature to command ; it is by such refusal he grows in strength, and goes on as a co-worker with God in creation. He is, like Paul, a follower of the Christ, in the regeneration of the earth ; he diminishes in a degree the sin and pain of a creation which groans until men learn to live divine lives of love and purity, or as the sons of God.¹

¹ Professor LeConte concludes his argument upon evolution

and the problem of evil, thus : "All evil consists in the dominance of the lower over the higher ; all good in the rational use of the lower by the higher. True virtue consists, not in extirpation of the lower, but in its subjection to the higher. The stronger the lower is the better, if only it be held in subjection. For the higher is nourished and strengthened by its connection with the more robust lower, and the lower is purified, refined, and glorified by its connection with the diviner higher, and by this mutual action the whole plane of being is elevated. It is only by action and reaction of all parts of our complex nature that true virtue is attained."

VII.

THE CONSUMMATION OF EVOLUTION IS IMMORTALITY.

THE subject of immortality is one of the most difficult that has ever engaged the human mind. Its discussion, upon philosophical grounds, has always been approached with misgivings by those who have appreciated the gravity of it and the profound mysteries which necessarily surround it.

It may be assumed that the Christian religion teaches immortality. And if one proceeds simply upon that ground, he has a comparatively easy task. All he has to do is to show that Christ or His apostles taught it, and then if persons are believers in the authority of the Christian religion, they are bound to accept it.

If a man believed that Cicero was a competent authority on the subject, he would base his belief in immortality upon the teachings of the great Roman. Socrates had convictions upon the matter. Philosophy seeks for the ground of those convictions.

If the Bible teaches immortality we would like to know why? Little, if anything, is directly taught in the Old Testament concerning it. And as to the New Testament, the proof of immortality is so connected with things which altogether transcend our experience that the man of science and of philosophy has been inclined to reject the testimony.

It appears to me there are reasonable grounds for a

belief in immortality, apart from the specific teachings of the Christian religion, and that evolution has made, or is making these grounds more plain.

If I proceed somewhat in a circle it will be because the subject evades the ordinary logical process. I have but two thoughts to present, — the evolution of religion, and the purpose of all evolution.

In the absence of anything authoritative to the contrary, the average man would be profoundly affected by the multitude of things which appear to go to the disproof of immortality. When the body dies the organism has ceased to exist. There is simply a residuum of so much matter, which is to undergo a process of dissolution. That matter may be left to the slower action of chemical changes, or it may be subjected to the swift combustion of a furnace. In either case the organism has gone, and finally gone, so far as the average man can discover. And the life, with which were connected intellectual power, and feelings, and will, and all other faculties and qualities which go to make up our complex being, have gone also. What has become of them? The average man — *i. e.*, the man who has only the ordinary or universal means of information — does not know. The universal means of information furnish no clue. Speak of life as a force, of human life as a combination of will-force, thought-force, and emotion-force, and all that can be discovered is that this force has taken its departure from the organism.

If you look upon a prairie covered with grass and flowers you will see exuberant life — life in manifold form and variegated color.

But the cold blasts of the north will wither and destroy the forms and the colors. There will be a

residuum, but as to the force involved in the individual organisms, that has gone somewhere. There will be a reappearance of like forms and colors in the next season; the individual organisms have gone beyond recall. It is the type that persists. Here, then, is an analogy which has been noted and made use of by a certain class of minds. Men of this class speak of a kind of survival which can reasonably be anticipated by all worthy human beings. This survival is in influence, and corresponds with the persistence of force. A man lives and endeavors after truth and right. His body dies. His personal consciousness is gone, and gone forever. He, as a conscious moral being, may be said to have gone into eternal repose, which is the equivalent of eternal nothingness; but whatever of influence he exerted in one way or another, persists. I think that we may confidently say that such a materialistic conception is not peculiar to our times. Evolution has given no ground for it, additional to the ground furnished by the older philosophies. But evolution does furnish ground for widely different conceptions. Let us be careful to remember the limitations of science; and that in respect to the survival of individual consciousness after the death of the body, science is silent.

All the direct evidence science could afford would be contrary to the supposition. At the point of death we enter the domain with which religion or a religious philosophy has to do. Science confesses that it cannot intrude. But science does not occupy the entire ground of human interests. Science, in its modern sense, is of course recent; but science, in some sense, is as old as thought. Persons saw things and events, and thought about them as well as they were able;

they even tried to get at the relations between one thing or event and another. They succeeded in finding many relations as time went on. And out of all these attempts came in due time, modern science. Religion, too, is very old. And religion, although among all peoples and at all times it has been more or less closely allied with superstition, and though it has very imperfectly taught men, yet it has had a genuine and high office in the world. We may be compelled to reject many specific teachings of many or indeed of all religions of the past, but to reject religion itself, as having no real place and function in this world, is unreasonable. Here is the phenomenon of the rise and growth of religion ; as distinctly marked as any other phenomenon, and to be as carefully studied as any other phenomenon. Granted that the religions of a remote antiquity partake of the crudities and intellectual infancy of their time, surely they must suggest to us that they all of them have a real office in the world, and may be expected to furnish the ground out of which shall grow a better and truer teaching. It is reasonable to suppose that the development of the religious feelings of men is as real as any other development. Now, in a way, religion has always either given to men a doctrine of immortality or it has been preparing the way for such a doctrine.

The evolution of religion and of the idea of immortality is of the very highest importance, for it shows the consummation of the works of creation. To neglect that is to act like the thirsty man who laboriously hunts for a spring of water, and when he reaches it declines to refresh himself at it. We are now able to trace, imperfectly, the genesis of man through the various orders and ranks of life on the

earth. In following the line of ascent we note a process which for convenience may be called "cephalization." That is the tendency of nature to locate the more delicate and subtle energies of advancing species in the head. The worm, for example, has its structure parallel to the surface of the ground, and its nerve force is distributed about equally among the different segments of its body. There is a minute ganglion, or bunch of nerves, in each portion. As you ascend the scale you discover the lifting of the head, in relation to the rest of the body, and the centring of the nerve force in it. And nature is very solicitous about this centre of energy, and protects it by means of a case of hard substance. So soon as man, the being of volition, is reached, the process of creation, so far as it relates to change of structure, is stopped. All attention, so to speak, is thenceforward given to the creation of that wonderful organ known as the brain. In the fish the brain consists of four or five swellings, or ganglia, strung along, one beyond the other. In the bird there is seen the enlargement of that portion of the brain known as the cerebrum, which is the seat of reason and volition. In man this cerebrum has grown so great that it covers every other part; so that, looked at from above, nothing is to be seen but this large ganglion. And not only so, but another change is noted. Not only has the brain of man grown enormously, as compared with his predecessors, but it has become creased, or convoluted, so as to increase the surface of gray brain matter. The cerebrums of fishes, reptiles, birds, and the lower mammals are smooth. As we reach the middle of the mammal series the process of convolution begins, and keeps on, reaching its highest in man. And it is de-

clared by competent biologists that the only structural change which is going on in man, as a species, is simply in the convolution of the brain. All this shows the tendency of nature to put the chief energy in the highest forms of life. The cerebrum is the seat of the reason and of volition. The enlargement and increase of complexity in that shows the increasing dominance of the higher over the lower. It shows how the portion of the brain structure which has to do with freedom of action is developed beyond all other portions. That is to say, to the evolutionist the track of advance, from the first, is seen to be toward the development of a moral being, who shall subordinate the other parts of creation to the highest moral purpose.

It is an appalling fact that ever since life began a wholesale destruction of life-forms has characterized evolution. The universal struggle for existence, "having succeeded in bringing forth that consummate product of creative energy, the human soul, has done its work, and will presently cease. In the lower regions of organic life it must go on, but as a determining factor in the highest work of evolution it will disappear." (Professor Fiske.)

It is very evident from the standpoint of evolution that the Creative Energy has ever been working toward a goal, or what we may call an ultimate achievement. The creation and perfecting of man is that goal. In reaching that, God has spared nothing. Races have risen, been carried along the path of development, and have disappeared. For millions upon millions of years the earth has been the theatre of violence and slaughter. The struggle for existence has filled the earth with pain. Or, as the Apostle Paul puts it:

“The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” To what purpose is all this pain? If there is no purpose, we exist but in a troubled dream. As human beings we have the power of thought, which only serves to bring us into a more acute realization of the universal pain. As human beings we have the power of feeling and of sympathy, which serves but to increase our participation in the groaning of a groaning creation. The increase of our life, its headward tendency, its delicacy and complexity must inevitably lead on to our growing distress and our intellectual confusion. If on the other hand we discern the convincing evidence of a purpose, how vastly is the significance of human life enlarged to us! We see man as the supernatural being, *i. e.*, with all nature below him. He is a birth of nature and of the Eternal Energy; he stands in a kingly relation with all that is below him. One trouble with the older kind of human thought has been that it immensely undervalued man and human nature. It simply saw the human being as a sinful being. It spoke of him as a corrupt thing and a worm of the dust. He has been a corrupt thing, a sinful being. He has degraded himself to crawl, worm-like, in the very dust of degradation. But that is not his place, and his putting himself in that place is the very root of his corruption.

Let us suppose the old question of the Hebrew seer were authoritatively asked now: “What is man?” There would be two classes of answers: One from the standpoint of scientific research, applied to the body of man. Man is a vertebrate, a mammal, a primate. From the structural point of view he stands in the most intimate relation with all lower creation. “Bone

for bone, muscle for muscle, ganglion for ganglion, almost nerve-fibre for nerve-fibre, his body corresponds with that of the higher animals. Whether he was derived from lower animals or not, certain it is that his structure even in the minutest details is precisely such as it would be if he were thus derived by successive slight modifications." (Professor LeConte). But from the other point of view, also attained by scientific research, it is impossible to exaggerate the width of the chasm between man and the highest animals. If therefore in conduct, in purpose, in thought, man makes himself resemble the lower animals, he descends as it were into an abyss. He is the one being capable of such degradation, and therefore by his degradation proclaims his greatness. Evolution brings to view a great Divine purpose, of which man is the consummation. When man is reached in the ascending scale there ensues the education and moral development of the being toward which all previous movement pointed. Why should this being be educated and further developed? Why should the faculties derived from previous pain and struggle, and developed by further pain and struggle, go on in development? If we regard humanity "as merely a local incident in an endless and aimless series of cosmical changes," then we shall have to answer that we do not know why there is such a being as man. But if we regard man as the "consummate fruition of creative energy, and the chief object of Divine care," we come to the conclusion that the career of the soul is not completed with the present life. Such a belief cannot of course be demonstrated; at least according to methods of demonstration with which we are familiar, neither can such a belief be refuted by any known demonstration.

Dr. Cabanis, an eminent French physician who died in the early part of this century, made the famous statement that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. It is edifying to know that he lived long enough to disbelieve that statement. But if he did not, it is now by scientific men characterized as grossly unscientific. Cerebral physiology tells us that while thought and feeling are always manifested, during our present life, in connection with the organ known as the brain, yet by no possibility can thought and feeling be in any sense the products of matter. Professor LeConte supposes that if the brain of a living man were exposed to view, and our senses were of the utmost acuteness so as to enable us to observe every change which occurs, we should see nothing but molecular changes, physical and chemical ; there is nothing else to see, to the outside observer. But the man whose brain is exposed to us sees nothing of this. His experiences are of emotions, thoughts, consciousness, etc. On the outside, motions ; on the inside, thoughts, etc. The connection between the outside and the inside, the nature of the relation, is entirely unknown to us. The soul is invisible, and to our senses we are sure that it will always remain so. It is immaterial, spiritual.

Evolutionary philosophy has concentrated a great force of thought upon the phenomena of nature in order to penetrate its mysteries. A few of these mysteries it has explored, so that they are no longer mysterious ; but our life and all phenomena stand against a background of insoluble mystery. At the same time we are related to this background of mystery most intimately. There is a sphere with which we have to do, — we are so constituted as to partly belong to it,

—which is not to be explored by our scientific methods. To meet the need of our natures, there has arisen among men the office of religion, the rise of which can be scientifically traced, in a measure. That it should take its beginning in a very feeble way, and should make its progress and growth in connection with much that is local, transient, and untrue, need surprise no intelligent student. But that it should gradually clear itself of the institutional chaff of earlier periods, that it should increase in power and dignity, is to be expected. To cast away religion because it has developed gradually, would be as foolish as to cast away science because in its earlier stages, and until a quite recent time, it was feeble and oftentimes absurd. Now religion enters us into the realm of mystery by which we are encompassed. It leads us to make inductions from the things which we see, in regard to the things which we do not see. I recognize as a religious philosophy the conviction of men that we are not here as the sport and playthings of giant forces of which we can know nothing. The materialistic thinker bids us be careful lest we assume something. But Newton assumed something, and Darwin assumed something. Each of these great men saw something which was altogether unproved, but which he believed to be true. With each of these men a great hypothesis had its birth. Now the hypothesis of religion we call faith. By faith certain principles and realities in the mysterious and invisible realm, the realm which lies beyond the demonstrations of science, become apprehended. By faith we apprehend God. We make induction from the phenomena of nature, including our own varied powers of reflection and our ability to will, of an Eternal Being who thinks, whose works,

including our own natures, manifest thought, will, and purpose. Science can place its finger upon its lips in presence of such august proceedings of the human mind. Science can make little or nothing of that which religion chiefly values. It is not because the two are in opposition, but because their respective provinces are widely distinct. Science tells us that nature is lavish in her vast abundance of forms, which come and go as in waves and tides of succession. Religion says: "Yes, forms come and go, but there is that which abides, which is only temporarily allied to form. It is of the abiding I speak."

Behold the works of God in material. The heavens declare the glory of God, the majesty of His might; but the heavenly bodies are not enduring. The latest and perhaps the clearest thought is that the movements of heavenly bodies are in tremendous cycles of change. Matter diffused as in thin mist of molecules, becoming clouds of more coherent matter, condensing into heated suns, cooling gradually into planets for habitation, — freezing into death, expanding again into a nebulous cloud, that the same process may be gone over again. All this vast process is meaningless from the purely scientific point of view. It is simply going up a hill and coming down again, and repeating the journey forever.¹ But religion seizes upon man as the goal of this mighty evolution. The exalted being who can think, feel, will; who is therefore the reflex of the Almighty Being who thinks, feels, wills; he becomes the explanation of the otherwise meaningless series of cosmical events. But his body returns to the elements of which it was organized; his dwelling-place returns to its elemental condition. Nature does

¹ See Professor Fiske, *Destiny of Man*.

not care for forms. It is the postulate of religion that the Creator does care for the being who is the supreme product of all.

I gladly admit that the chief office of religion is to teach man ethically, to train him in the way of righteousness and truth, so that the earth shall not be the habitation of cruelty and treachery, but the abode of mercy, justice, and truth. For the purpose of the development of the human spirit it is exceedingly needful that the emphasis shall not be drawn from this great work of religion, and placed upon the prospective benefits and pleasures of a future state of existence. For in respect to that state religion has nothing to teach except symbolically. Religion can only affirm it, and urge men to so live that they shall not tremble at the idea of a transfer out of the limits of the present corporeal existence into the revelations of the world to come. Religion can and must condemn a life of sin and wrong, and point out the truth that such a course involves results of the gravest import, not only as to immediate consequences, but as to remote consequences. It can and must approve every effort of man to live a pure life. It has done what it could, often unwisely, to deter men from wrong and to encourage them in right. But all has reference, near or remote, to the fitness of the spirit of man for immortality.

In a case of great importance before the courts it is most desirable to hear all the witnesses. The case cannot be adjudicated properly upon a merely partial testimony. I take it that all the phenomena in nature ought to be called to the witness stand in so grave an issue as that of the immortality of the soul: If religion is to be dismissed, or its testimony thrown out, I am sure the decision will not be wise or according to the actual facts.

Religions differ, and some of them are silent upon the great question ; but their tendency, in those communities which have made the greatest progress, has been to teach the immortality of the soul.

And the highest religion of all assumes the capacity of men for immortality as it assumes the being of God. For the Christian religion begins with the affirmation that man stands in a filial relation to the Eternal Spirit.

It seeks to raise men up to the realization of that fact. It sets before men the one goal of effort — to be, in conditions of time, and finite powers, like the Eternal.

In other words, the movements of creation from the beginning of recorded time, in geological eras, and since the advent of man, point to a purpose and a goal. This purpose, what is it? Shall rational beings, ever inquiring, always inquire in vain? Has not an answer been growing up right alongside of the inquiry? The development of religion, with its postulate of immortality, is, must be, the answer.

The development of spirit, the invisible thinker, using the brain as the player uses the organ ; the invisible will, employing the cerebrum as the mechanic employs his machine, — this is the consummation.

And is this consummation of ages to pass into oblivion, or be involved again in the endless whirl of atoms? Science cannot say anything about it, pro or con. But it seems to me philosophy, taking the results of science, can and must press on to find the answer, — or to take the answer which has grown up in the intuitions of men, we know not how. Says Professor LeConte: "Is there any possible meaning in nature without this consummation? All evolution

has its beginning, its course, its end. Without spirit-immortality this beautiful cosmos which has been developing into increasing beauty for so many million of years, when its evolution has run its course, and all is over, would be precisely as if it had never been ; an idle dream, an idiot tale, signifying nothing."

Paul the apostle declares that the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God ; or translate it into the language of philosophy : The evolution of the cosmos is not a purposeless procession of events, from lower to higher ; it reaches the highest as it started from the lowest, and the highest is not an arrangement of atoms in a globe or an assembly of worlds. It is not a plant ; it is not an animal ; it is not a thinking animal ; it is a spirit, acting in freedom. Such a spirit must be most closely related to the Eternal Spirit ; it must be a son of God.

Or look at it in this way. We may speak of all the forces of nature as manifestations in general of the Eternal Power. That Power had its sweep along the field of atoms, combining them. It individuates itself (as LeConte suggests) in the plant ; still more in the animal ; but most in the highest range of life, in the human spirit. Man is the supreme birth of nature ; is it reasonable to suppose that when this climax is reached, it is as if nothing had been reached ? If so, then I am sure we are put to "permanent intellectual confusion." And the intelligence we have achieved thus far enters us into a chaos from which we might pray to be delivered, even at the expense of intelligence itself.

Some one might ask : "Can you conceive how a conscious spirit can exist without a cerebrum ?" No, I cannot explain such an existence ; but I suffer very

nearly as great a trouble, if not quite as great, in trying to explain the conjunction of a conscious spirit with a cerebrum. If He, of whom philosophy speaks as Eternal Energy; of whom the religion of Christ speaks as the Father of spirits, exists, I do not try to fathom the mode of His Being. Neither can I tell the mode of the immortality of the human spirit.

I do not affirm the necessary immortality of human souls. It seems to me that here, as well as elsewhere, the great law of the survival of the fit will prevail. I look upon immortality as mainly qualitative, and it is to be sadly observed that many souls do not choose the qualities of truth and righteousness, which are essential to a divine, and, therefore, an immortal life.

But despite the difficulties, which are great, the reasonableness of the idea of immortality will grow, as the grand philosophy of evolution grows, until the revealing of the sons of God is complete, and men shall gladly and gloriously recognize in themselves and others the presence of an immortal conscious spirit.

VIII.

RESIDENT FORCES AND THE DIVINE PERSONALITY.

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded.” — I KINGS viii., 27.

DURING the past twenty-five years a large number of intelligent religious persons have rejected the doctrine of evolution because convinced that the hypothesis displaced God. They have reasoned that if you have evolution you have no need of God; in fact you have no place for God. Creation implies a Creator; but if in place of creation you substitute evolution, the Creator is gone. Take up the idea that here were atoms and here was force to begin with. The coming together of force and atoms produced worlds. Here was matter, inorganic, and here was life (*i. e.*, a higher kind of force); the two come together and there is organic structure. Here is organic structure going on by resident energy to develop itself in new form, — increasing in complexity and scope until man is reached. What need of a Creator is there if all this is true? That is in substance the way many have felt and talked. But of these objectors many have clearly seen that they talked and felt in a very unwise way.

Time was when tables were made by hand. The maker would take a stick, and by careful manipulation make it into a leg for a table. Perhaps he would

carve it. Then he would proceed in the same way with another leg. Then he would get out the pieces wherewith to connect these legs together. He would dig out mortise holes with bit and chisel. He would saw out the boards for the top and plane them and smooth them. He would put all the pieces together, and in due time the table would be made. Let this kind of a table creator go into a factory now. He would see a stick fed into a machine, and it would emerge a table leg. Mortices are cut by machines. The covering boards are sawed and smoothed by machinery. The man comes out of the factory and says that men do not make tables any more; tables get into existence by some kind of performance. As for men, they are not required.

Perhaps, he bitterly remarks, there are no men any more. With these new-fangled contrivances table creators have gone. "For my part, I believe the whole thing is bad. I will not accept any such state of things." Further reflection will be likely to convince the man that he was unwise in his bitter feelings on this subject. And if after a time he becomes candid, he will come to a change of mind in respect to men. He will consider what a wonderful being a man is, and what a wonderful brain he has, to be able to make such contrivances. So that instead of coming to the conclusion, as he at first wished to do, that table-creators are of no account, he will say that they are of much more account than he dreamed.

In a previous chapter evolution was defined as progressive change, according to certain laws, by reason of resident forces. "Yes," some one says, "it is the definition itself which shows the character of the whole scheme; for it does away with God; all that

you require is resident forces. Your theory, on the face of it, is atheistic." I need hardly remind you that every proposition appears atheistic which necessitates a reformation of our thoughts of God. The apostles of Christ were condemned at Ephesus as atheists, because they could not think of God as being the Diana of the Ephesians. They could not think of God as the Ephesians did. But we do not call them atheists now. The change of conception regarding the nature or being of God has come to be of exceeding interest, and it is constantly growing in interest. It is to be admitted that this phrase, "resident forces," must become better understood, or it will prove an insurmountable obstacle to the progress of the evolutionary philosophy among many who hold faith in God to be the highest operation of the human soul. It is the highest act of the soul. Were it not that I am convinced that evolution will vastly increase the faith of men in an ever-living and ever-present God, my personal interest in it would not be large.

Resident forces appear to be very insignificant things to many or perhaps all careless thinkers. There is of course a resident force in a thistle. A thistle is a weed, to be pulled up, or stricken down, and destroyed. But man with all his intellectual subtlety, and all of his powers, is absolutely nothing, as compared with the resident force in a thistle, — *i. e.*, for specific ends. It would at first thought seem as if man were more able than resident forces in a vegetable. I do not consent to discredit man, and his most wonderful abilities, but I wish to call your attention to the fact that resident forces in vegetation, the lowest form of organic life, are greatly more able than man is for definite ends. I will even say infinitely

more able. For example, among the other accomplishments of man is his chemist faculty. He is a most expert chemist when he gives his mind to it. But there is a resident force in a maple-tree which discounts all of his chemistry, accomplishing that which he is incompetent to do. He has his crucibles, and retorts, and other appliances, in his laboratory. The resident force in a maple-tree has no tools or crucibles. Now let us see how the man-chemist and the resident-force chemist in the maple will compete with each other.¹ Sugar is constituted by the union of carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen. Any human chemist of average skill can, I suppose, decompose sugar and show the three elements of it. But no human chemist can unite these three elements and produce sugar. But the resident force in a maple, or a beet, or a sugarcane has sufficient skill to accomplish this union, and that continually. There is nothing in the hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon to cause them to unite of themselves, and form sugar, but the resident force in the vegetable, taking the matter in hand, consummates the union, and gives us freely of the product. Then there is another fact which adds greatly to the significance of these resident forces. Hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon are taken in precisely the same proportion by the resident force in some other vegetable organism, and united to form starch, which is quite different in taste and other properties from sugar. How does this mysterious chemistry proceed? Certainly every one would acknowledge that it proceeds from within the plant, and by virtue of the life, or moving force in the plant.

Take a grain of corn, and make a thin transverse

¹ See Dr. Horace Bushnell's *Life or the Lives*.

section of it, and place it under your microscope. It is vegetable fibre, arranged symmetrically. And that is all you see. Take another seed of the same kind and put it in the soil. You have not discovered any resident force in the section under your microscope, but you know it is there; and it begins to act when placed in suitable conditions. It acts as chemist, making nicest choice of fit substance for its purpose; it acts as master builder, marshaling its multitude of servants; it acts as architect, giving proportion and form to the uprising structure; it acts as engineer, pumping water to every part; it is a whole municipal board, attending to a million of details, from the subways where its roots are pushed to reach their supplies, up to the tassels and spires which rise like minarets over the whole corporate structure. I may seem to the reader to be talking in a strain of extravagant diction, trying to spread a web of words over a very small thing, namely, a grain of corn; but I assure you it is so far out of my power to do any fraction of justice to the subject that I feel discouraged at the start. The resident force in a grain of corn is of so intricate, so subtle, so skillful, so altogether wonderful a character, that it can be spoken of only in a way of feeble comparison with our own chemical, architectural, and other procedures, which it throws far into the shade.

When we gaze upon bulky objects, such as the sun, or one of the larger planets, we are filled with a feeling of awe, because we seem to be certified of a mighty power, and a supreme skill exerted in the creation and maintenance of so vast a structure. But the skill, at least, located in the resident force of a grain of corn, is quite as effectively certified to when it is

looked at with as careful a gaze. Then when we multiply our one corn-grain, with all the product of its resident force, up into the incommensurable numbers of similar structures, and all going on in growth by resident force, perhaps we begin to see that the phrase holds more significance than we at first supposed. The very infinitesimals which seemed so small as to afford no room for an appreciable resident force, testify to the thoughtful mind of a skill which, being brought so near a mere point in display, is yet infinite in quality.

As you float past Coblenz on the Rhine, the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein frowns down upon you, witnessing there, silently, grimly, the power of dead and living monarchies. As you float over the warm waves of tropic seas, you will behold the works of little creatures, so small as to present no visibility, but whose fortifications are so huge as to dwindle your Rhine castle to a mere nothing. Resident force, an assembly of resident forces so numerous as to baffle any attempt at a census, populating the reef, building coöperatively, each with its little grain of matter, the islands of the sea. What is this resident force? If I am told that it is nothing but the power of the organism, operating independently, but under a law imposed upon it, I am not enlightened.

I suppose all will agree that the adult human being is the most freely active being on earth. Such a being lives the most independent life of any organism. A man consults his own will, and the laws of well being, as no other organism is capable of doing. He can deliberately brieften his existence, or lengthen it, by exercise of will. But what can he do in respect to the beating of his own heart? The beat of the

heart is the contraction of the cardiac muscles. What causes this alternate expansion and contraction? Certainly not any voluntary action on the part of the man. Awake or asleep, the heart beats on, half a century, or even a century, sometimes faster, sometimes slower, but without stoppage, and independently of the being who has more self-direction than any other. What causes it? You will perhaps say it is the law of the organism. But law is not in any such sense causative. The laws of the State of New York are sometimes spoken of as if they did something, as when we say that the law lays its heavy hand upon a transgressor; but the law of the State has no hand and does nothing. It is well to understand this thoroughly. The law of the State of New York is simply the mode of the social and political activity of the people of New York, combined in a body politic. So we sometimes heedlessly talk of the law of gravity, as if it held the earth in its place, relatively to other bodies; and of the law of cohesion, as though it held the particles of matter of which the earth is composed, together.

Now, there is no truth in such a notion. If we think of a natural law, or of any kind of a law as doing something, the very smallest conceivable thing, we think unskillfully. A law is merely the way in which a force or energy is exerted. The people of the State of New York hang the sentenced criminal, only they proceed to do it in a certain definite and orderly manner. That manner is called the law. When you mistake a mode for a power, it is like mistaking a railway track, stationary, for a railway train, movable. Well, then, if it is not the law of the organism which causes the beat of the heart, perhaps it is the life of the organism. Let us say that the life of the

man causes his heart to beat. This life is a force, since it induces motion. Is it a self-originating force? Then it is the uncaused. Is it an independent and self-sustaining force? Then it is deity. But the force which impels the heart-beat is a limited force, and it is local. It is also not self-sustaining, because the expenditure of the force must be compensated for by nutrition. What then can we say of it but that the Eternal Energy is the source of the transient and local energy, or, to take the thought up into the language of religion, every life of every grade is immediately dependent upon God, and is in fact the finite expression of God's life? And it is just here the line between pantheism and the Christian doctrine of the Divine omnipresence fades into a very faint line apparently. The mystery is at best very profound, and we may not hope to explore it to its depths, but we can feel our way into it with somewhat more of light than was possible a quarter of a century ago.

Over a century and three quarters ago, Bishop Berkeley denied the independent existence of matter and the causal efficiency of natural forces. He affirmed the direct activity of God in all natural phenomena; which was a return to the ancient view, so often expressed in the Hebrew Scriptures. The common view had been, and is largely now, that in the main nature is sufficient to itself; that God made the various kinds of organisms to start with, and endowed them so that they could go on by a kind of independent force lodged in themselves, reproducing their kinds, so keeping the species alive; and that then He retired to a sublime transcendency, only interfering now and then, as some exigency might arise. Darwin has shown that species were not made in that way; that

they came to be by progressive change, brought about by resident forces. Now what has Darwin done? Has he pushed God still farther away than did the older philosophy, into a still higher transcendency, — into perpetual absence and non-interference? Or has the philosophy which dates with his work brought God closer than was conceived possible? At first it appeared that evolution dismissed God, by showing that He did not make species off-hand. It now, however, appears that the absence of God from His works at any point would be the withdrawal of the Eternal Energy, and would put a stop to everything. The resident force is not an independent force, — it is the manifestation of the infinite Power. The Christian theist is supposed to cordially accept the teaching of Christ, in respect to the Divine government, as not being afar off, but as being near. With the Son of Man he leans over the flower of the field to consider it, and note the method of its growth. He may be expected to believe that God makes the clothing of the flower. The scientific man now tells him that the unfolding of petal, and leaf, and the color, and the flying odors, are all due to changes produced by resident forces. Ought that to appall him? Should he not be glad to know that all these resident forces, of whatever nature, are immediately connected with, and are manifestations of, the Eternal Power. Shall he not better understand now what was meant by those words, "If God so clothe the grass of the field"?

Yes, except for a certain apprehension which troubles the thoughtful mind, and that is the dread of pantheism. But the same dread may well be aroused by such sayings as those of Solomon when he dedicated the first temple: "Will God indeed dwell on the

earth? behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded." Or by such words as those of Paul when he stood in the midst of the Areopagus at Athens and said respecting the unknown God: "He is not far from each one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being." In the history of human thought there never was a time when such words could mean so much as to-day. For it is the great scientific discovery of our day, that all change, all modification of form, that is to say, all creation, goes on by means of resident forces. But these resident forces are not separate, or separable in thought, from the Eternal Energy whom in religion we name God.

What then shall we say of the Divine personality? Are we now to be driven to think of God as diffused force? As a mere element, unconscious, in which we live and move, as the globes move in ether? You will remember how strenuous was the law of Moses in regard to representations of Deity. God must not be objectified. That was the distinction of Israel among the nations of the earth. There were everywhere tendencies to put concepts of God into some form outside of consciousness. About the first effort of the Mosaic legislation is to prevent this. The thunder peal of Sinai rolls always in the highest consciousness of man — God is not an object. If not, then is God a person?

Before we answer, note that we have sometimes had very feeble and foolish notions of personality. To the most unskillful in thought, a person is a being wearing clothes, having a voice, piping soprano, gruff bass, or something between the two. Well, that cor-

responds with the original meaning of the word person. But it does not correspond with the meaning which it now bears. A person is a self-conscious being who wills, who thinks, who loves. As I take it, therefore, an invisible being. How such a being can be infinite — how such a being is to be thought of as not containable in the heaven of all heavens combined, as the being in whom we live and move and are, as the Energy of all energies and the Life of all lives, is beyond my power of explanation. But then I do not at all comprehend a finite personality. I see the evidence of it on all hands, — I see the works and manifestations of it; I am sure that it exists, though invisible to me. I am equally sure of the infinite personality, witnessing itself to me through plentiful evidences of will, thought, and love. Science helps me to a systematic knowledge of the ways and thoughts of a Being invisible to me.

We have all the time been more or less heedless of the deep old law, and have imaged God, in our image-making faculty, the imagination.

We have conceived God as bodied in some form. A venerable face like that of Abraham, in the pictures of the children's books; a localized Being, seated in highest state. And we are distressed at any philosophy which drives such images out of our minds; we cry out that it is pantheism. But such images do not belong to us; they ought to be banished. We need to be rid of the idea of a localized, non-resident God, who is merely a kind of infinite overseer, doing nothing Himself, but keeping a distant watch over the deficiencies of those who do something. And we have come to that new dispensation in philosophy when that idea becomes impossible. The opposition which ever meets new dispensations is encountered, but the issue

is not doubtful to any one acquainted with the evolutionary doctrine.

The human personality has been spoken of as incomprehensible and essentially invisible. It is brief and convenient for us to say, in common speech, that we see our fellow-men. What we do see is some manifestations of the force and personality of our fellow-men. You do see a human form, and you infer a somewhat back of its visibility. You know there is a brain; and associated with that, as well as with other portions of the form, a something not physical, but spiritual, self-conscious; a will, a thinker. This wholly spiritual being reports itself constantly to your observation in a thousand ways; you cannot understand the connection between it and the phenomena. There is a will, acting in some profoundly mysterious way upon the nerves and muscles, and causing certain activities. From your window you will see a crowd of human forms moving this way and that. Each one is impelled by an invisible will. What you look upon, therefore, is the manifestation of a procession of will powers. Now there are two distinct orders of activity, the physical and the spiritual, or psychical. The first is dependent on the last. Nature is a vast composite, or body of motion, force, matter. Shall we not infer, back of all visibility, the consciousness, will, and thought which combine in one word, personality? We could not do it under the old philosophy; we could infer only secondary causes, rather than the immediate energy of the First Cause.

If there is any demand which it is natural for us to make, it is for adequate causation. We all affirm as necessary an infinite cause, because no causation less than infinite will satisfy our minds. We also now

affirm the unity of nature. Here are powers; we refer them to the one infinite Power. But here, among other powers, is intelligence. Can we think of the intelligent as coming ultimately from the unintelligent? Can we think of volition as springing ultimately from the absence of volition? I doubt not there are those who assume that we can thus think. And others decline to try to think on such a subject as being altogether beyond our scope. But, it seems to me that the very skill we possess in doing things, in thinking, witnesses a skill that is greater than ours. But can you imagine a skill as belonging to an unconscious being? Is the Eternal Energy displaying itself in such a manifold and boundless way to be thought of as possessing no intelligence, while its operations are so many constant proofs of intelligence? The bee builds its cell hexagonal, the most compact form for the purpose. Is the bee an independent engineer? The coral creatures make their fortifications in the tropic seas: have they an independent skill in island building? The heart of a man beats rhythmically; has it a skill in contraction and expansion? Does our earth have a skill in following the track of the ecliptic? Or has the gravity law a skill in compelling it so to do? Nay, back of all, upholding all, energizing all, is the skill, the will of One who must be the source of all skill and will. And this One must be a person. But if any one says that personality is limitation; that it is local; that it is necessarily connected with and conditioned by a finite organism, then I affirm that God is not a person in that sense.¹ I reaffirm the doctrine

¹ Finite personality is of necessity limited, and an infinite personality must differ from the finite in this: that it is necessarily unlimited.

of the Mosaic law, the doctrine of Christ and Paul, that God is not a person to be imaged in human or any other form ; that He is not limited and not local. Perhaps we can think of nature itself as the composite organism of God, related in a way somewhat analogous to the relation of the spirit and body of man. But, however we can or cannot think upon that, it seems to me that it is easier for men of science and philosophy to think of the Eternal Power as a person, a Being of skill and will, in the truest and deepest sense, therefore, a moral Being, than to think in any other way, or to decline to think in any way.

Given creation, going on by means of resident forces, and according to (not by means of) certain laws — which is our definition of evolution, — and the human mind is brought to an immediate view of the actual and immediate power of the Creator ; and since the resident forces, as well as the laws in which they proceed, constantly indicate order, prevision, and wisdom, we are brought very close to the Being in whom we really live (though we know it not), and move, and have our being ; and we recognize this Being as in the deepest (not the shallowest) sense a person.

It is the hopeful prophecy of some of the Hebrew seers, taken up and incorporated in Christian thought, that the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. That such knowledge could come during the prevalence of the philosophies which have placed God at an infinite remove from His creation, would appear impossible. The incoming of the new philosophy removes, as I think, an obstacle of the gravest character. To prepare the way for a better and truer philosophy, — not a complete and perfect philosophy, — such men as Spinoza and Schleier-

macher, Berkeley and Swedenborg, Coleridge and Spencer, have been raised up. That these men and others were divinely raised up I dare not doubt; and their truest, highest office must be to bring men to the contemplation of the present and living God.

I look along the line of centuries to come, and see the travail of the soul of Christ, in the redemption of the world, complete; and an innumerable host shall witness with glad acclaim the presence of Him of whom and by whom are all things.

IX.

THE PHILOSOPHY AND FAITH OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

“And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain.” — HEBREWS xii. 27.

THE attitude of the Christian church toward the new philosophy is a most serious matter, not only as respects the church itself, but as respects the welfare of society. For the church has a very prominent and important place relative to the welfare of society.

It seems to me that two mistakes are made about the mission of the church: one by those who are in it, and support it and love it; and the other by those who are outside of it, and do not love it. The mistake made by the insider is that the Christian church is in this world to be a standing protest against the world, and that this is, if not its chief business, at least second to the chief business. The mistake of the outsider is in taking this view of the insider to be an authorized one, made necessary by the constitution of the body. If the church is an elect company of persons chosen out of the populations of the world, to be saved, to be righteous and good, while all the balance of the world's people is left to wend its dark and evil way to destruction, the case is clear enough. Then the church is compelled in the nature of things to be hostile to the world. It will be like a ship bound for

some port on the other side, which pursues its way, unheedful of multitudes of persons who surround it in little craft, unseaworthy, and doomed to be sunk by the next storm that flies. The ship might offer accommodations to a limited number, to those who should accept its rigorous conditions, but the great multitude would be left behind to perish. I think the church has never entertained such an opinion of itself for any length of time, and in any great proportion of its membership. It has often, and especially of late, endeavored to get as many people within its boundaries and benefits as possible. It has imposed conditions, and not infrequently conditions which it had no right to impose; and it has often suffered itself to be diverted from its true and high purpose. Yet has it always had this truth more or less acknowledged among its membership, that it is here in the world to be a light and a blessing to the world. Whether or not that truth is acknowledged, it must be evident to any candid person who will look into it, that the true mission of any institution growing up among us as the church has done, must be to live and strive and suffer for the welfare of men, and of all men, so far as possible. If it is not of that character, it is nothing but an obstruction, to be swept out of the way in due time. If the church exists for its own benefit solely, or even chiefly, it has sadly departed from the spirit and conduct of the Founder, who lived for men, and died for men. It has in that case become an apostate church, and the world — proceeding along its course of advancing enlightenment — will leave it far behind, and will contrive to get along without it. But I do not believe that the Christian church will make such shipwreck of its faith. While it has done many wrong

things in the past, and will probably do wrong and absurd things in the future, the probabilities are strong that it will rectify its errors of judgment and feeling, though not without friction and contention.

I am sure that the criticisms of those outside the church are often more harsh and sweeping than the facts warrant. Outsiders are tempted to do scanty justice to the work the church has accomplished. They do not seem to see those elements within the church which are ever at work for its reformation. The same institution which produced a Leo X. and the abominations of the papal hierarchy, also produced a Luther and a Zwingli to denounce them. The same institution which developed the grossly ignorant fat friar of the fifteenth century also developed the learned Erasmus to bewilder the fat friar, and to apply the lash of caustic criticism to the whole bad business. Two classes of people are in the church, as in every similar body: those who promote and those who resist incoming truth. Now, since these last are the most numerous, they are mistakenly supposed to represent the institution in the main. They do not represent it. He who should attempt to write a history, and to form an historical estimate of the Christian church in America, altogether from the work of such men as Edwards, and Emmons, and Hodge, excluding men like Channing, and Parker, and Beecher, and Phillips Brooks, and Heber Newton, and David Swing, would be like one describing a lot of bones, bound together by joints and ligaments, as a human being, forgetting to mention the life power, the heart and brain power, in connection with the bones. The intellectual life of the church has been in its light-seekers and light-spreaders; and this real life has

always encountered the inertia, or the more active resistance, of conservatism. But that is the universal law which governs progress. The church ought not to be condemned because its progress has been like every other progress, halting, hindered, and slow.

If I am asked what the church will do with the new philosophy, I answer unhesitatingly that it will accept it. It is already beginning to accept it. As the evolutionary philosophy advances in its demonstrations, the church takes them into consideration, and to take them into intelligent consideration is to accept them. But the church does not make haste in the acceptance of new philosophies.

Why should it? If it were a scientific society it would be busy with fossils and theories upon the cross fertilization of plants, and would be making discoveries in a great many interesting departments. It would be developing electrical appliances, and would have laboratories, and observatories, and every conceivable thing for the advancement of science. But it is not a scientific society. Neither is it an association of philosophers. If it were it might reasonably be expected to verify, or disprove at once, or so soon as possible, the theories of Descartes, Kant, Comte, and Spencer. It would have its hands full of that employ, and little leisure for anything else. The church is neither a school of science nor of philosophy. It has its specific work to do in the world — the most noble work of any institution — and that must not be neglected for other work which can be done by other agencies. Science must go on, and philosophy must go on, and do their work. All the help they can afford, the church is entitled to.

There are those who appear to think that all that

God does He does in and through the church. That is part of the old delusion which built up the notion of a divine absentee, and gave priestcraft its opportunity. It is the kind of delusion which the evolutionary philosophy is consuming to-day. God has His prophets and seers not only in religion, but in every kingdom of thought and interest. He has His Copernicus and His Kepler, His Faraday and Huxley, His Agassiz and Dana. The religious Bible is not the only Bible which has been written or is being written. These other bibles must also be given forth by those men whom God carries forward in the current of His vast purpose. Religion is the highest interest, but all of these other things are necessary and valuable. Therefore the prophets of chemistry, of geology, of biology, of political economy, and the seers who see and sing, have each their divine function here among us. The church is the one institution which above every other has its proper sphere in seeking to develop the moral and spiritual nature of mankind. And it will call to its aid, in the prosecution of its noble office, whatsoever philosophy and science can afford. But it will not be hasty. Judging from its past we are sure that it will be prudent, even to hard obstinacy. And there is a reason for that which ought not to be overlooked by critics. In its early constitution the church was a body of associates who sought eagerly to bear a message of joy and hope to mankind. It was the message of Christ: God the Father of us all; men the partakers of a Divine nature; not to be slaves, therefore, of the animal nature; not to be the haters, but lovers one of another; not to be oppressors, but helpers and saviors; not to be self-seekers, but the seekers of the welfare of others. A noble message, inspiring

men with courage, and kindling their souls with love. Jew, Samaritan, Roman, Greek, Asiatic, heard the message and believed it, and were knit together in associations of love and purity. The associations were the churches. In process of time arose orderly methods of thinking, or philosophies.

It would be impossible, we conclude, for such a body of people, continuing to increase, not to arrive at the period of philosophizing. They divided into parties, each accentuating some special mode of thinking respecting the Divine nature, and the world, and sin. We may find fault with them if we choose, but what else could happen, so long as people think? Councils or consultations were held. The churches selected their wisest men, or presumably so, to discuss the great topics upon which divisions of opinion were threatening the unity of the body. And so grew up that form of philosophy technically called theology. We say perhaps it would have been better if this had been avoided, and if the churches could have kept on with the promulgation of their simple message, and in the doing of the various works of love. But a thinking creature is bound to think, and especially under the stimulus of a great religious impulse.

The general consent, after much heat of debate, was obtained to a form of philosophy advocated by Athanasius. The other forms, such as those of Arius, etc., were put aside or became modes of dissent from the general consensus. Thus grew up the religious philosophy of the church. The mode of Christian thought of the speculative sort was settled practically in the first half of the fourth century. It was expanded and put in application by the genius of Augustine at the

beginning of the fifth century, from which time philosophical thought appears to have been at a standstill. If a thing is settled there is no use in troubling one's brains about it farther. But it is to be noted that the church early confused its *philosophy* (which was a body of opinions) with its *faith* (which was a following of Jesus Christ). And the general result is that the church has a philosophy inherited from the far past, which she strives to maintain, under the mistaken feeling that to abandon the philosophy is to abandon the faith.

Now the evolutionary philosophy negatives the church's theology.

The two cannot coexist in the same mind. Consequently, of course, the new philosophy threatens the existence of the philosophy which is so venerable, and to many seems so sacred. But neither the church itself nor the faith of the church is threatened by evolution in any degree. To illustrate. The faith of the church was early developed to assert that man occupies the chief place in the regard of God. This grew very naturally out of the teachings of Christ respecting the fatherhood of God. The philosophy of the case was to this effect, that man occupied a central and an immovable place in the stellar system. The dwelling-place of mankind, *i. e.*, the earth, was the greatest of all the heavenly bodies; it was the centre around which other and smaller bodies had their motion. And this was so confused with the faith of the church, that when Galileo and Giordano Bruno announced their discoveries, that the earth was not a central place, the church at once condemned the discovery as contrary to the faith. It was not in any degree contrary to the faith, but certainly was contrary

to the philosophy which had been confounded with the faith. And the new and better philosophy grew into universal acceptance; but this acceptance did not destroy the church; it did not destroy the faith; but it did destroy a great deal of confidence in the ancient philosophy.

The faith of the church may be likened to a precious stone of purest water, and which emits a light from its lustrous bosom; the philosophy of the church is like the setting of this jewel. Now three things may happen: (1.) The jewel may stand by itself alone, without a setting; or, (2.) It may be set in glittering unsubstantial foil, and people may come to have so great conceit of the setting as to be oblivious of the jewel itself; or, (3.) The jewel may be fitly embraced in a true golden setting, substantial and excellent. It appears to me that with respect to the faith of the church two of these things have already happened, and the third is in process of happening. The faith of the church in its earliest period was simple. It commanded the assent of mankind because to see it was to admire it, and finally to accept it. It had no philosophical setting. Then came the time of philosophizing; it had to come, since it is in accordance with our human constitution that we shall philosophize. But philosophy springs out of the actual findings of men in nature.

Here are facts, phenomena, and all the things we now group under the head of data; we must put them in order, systematize them; we must arrange them so as to satisfy our logical demands. That is right, and necessary. For my part I do not presume to find fault with the early church for making a philosophy for its faith. I doubt not it did as well as it could do.

And it is not to the discredit of the church that its philosophy was faulty, and to a degree superficial. How could it have been otherwise? The sun appears to move around the earth and it appears to be a very small body in comparison with the earth. These apparent facts were taken to be real facts, and a philosophy was constructed on the basis of them. Was anybody to blame for supposing that these superficial appearances represented the truth of the case? Certainly not. The philosophy was not true, it was superficial; we have been compelled to cast it aside. That is to say, we remove the old, thin, and unsubstantial setting from the jewel of the faith, in order to put it in a newer and better setting. And it is just as righteous for us to do that, as it was for the fathers of the church to have any philosophy at all. It is not only righteous, it is imperative.

The early church had its teachings respecting sin and the forgiveness of sin. These teachings belonged to its faith. It was entirely natural that men should then have sought for some systematic method of thinking on these great subjects. People had speculated upon the problem of evil; Christian people had now to speculate upon the problem of forgiveness. The question "Why is there sin in the world?" stares us in the face. It stared them in the face.

They undertook to answer it. There was the story of the garden of Eden, and the disobedience of our first parents. There was the short passage in the writings of the Apostle Paul bearing upon that matter. Here are the materials, the data, and the philosophy begins to get itself made. They reasoned that man began his course here on earth as a morally perfect being, or at least a sinless being; he fell from

that high estate wherein he was created. From being a success he suddenly became a ruin. The basis of the philosophy of sin was found in a story which no experienced and intelligent person of our day accepts in its literalness. But there was no reason why they should not accept it unreservedly. Accepting the story of the paradise as a basis of fact, the doctrine of sin became a sort of centre of the whole system of philosophy. Next came the question of forgiveness of sin. Christ had taught forgiveness, and so had Moses. "How and why can sin be forgiven?" was therefore the topic of speculation. The whole business began to assume a transactional shape. Go back to the Eden story: Satan by his cunning and conquest of man had become man's proprietor. He had a right and title in man; a right not to be disputed. If man is to be redeemed from his dreadful condition of sin and consequent pain, a price must be paid to this proprietor, who is such by conquest. God cannot forgive the sins of the subjects of the satanic potentate until some kind of equivalent has been rendered. This equivalent is rendered in the sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross. Payment having thus been duly made the sinner can be forgiven his sins. That is substantially, though, of course, not in terms, the Augustinian philosophy respecting forgiveness. Not proving satisfactory — as one might well imagine, — seven centuries later the Christian philosophy of sin and forgiveness was in part reconstructed by Anselm. He dismisses Satan from being a partner in the transaction. For Satan he substitutes the Divine justice. God's majesty and justice are in a state of perpetual offense, by reason of the sin of mankind. By this fallen nature man is obnoxious to God's justice, and by his practice of evil he puts that

justice continually more and more in opposition to him. He incurs an ever-increasing debt. This debt must be paid. This debt is finally paid by the sacrifice of the Son of God. In virtue of that payment, it becomes right and possible for God to forgive sins.

Note that there were two terms in the faith of the church: sin and forgiveness; and these were philosophized about until they were put in the setting of philosophy. And not only so, but the philosophy became of far more importance and value than the faith. Men were required to believe in it, as though it were an article of faith. But it is not an article of faith, it is an article of philosophy; and therefore it must stand upon the merit of its argument. That is the only way any philosophy can stand. If we find the argument defective, the philosophy is gone. That the argument is defective can be shown, both negatively and positively. The philosophy is to the effect that the justice of God the Father must be satisfied; the coequal Son of God proceeds to satisfy this justice of the Father. But if the Son of God is of the same nature and quality as the Father, then it becomes equally necessary to satisfy the justice of the Son. If anything, there is a greater breach of justice toward Him than toward the Father. The philosophy is entirely silent with respect to that. Moreover, an entirely different philosophy has come into existence. It has come slowly, the result of the work of centuries; and of the most careful work that men have ever done. It rests on a science so strenuously exact, so cautiously true to ascertained facts, and so sustained at every point by unassailable proofs, that no trained investigator can doubt its deliverances. This new philosophy does not attack the faith of the church, but it

furnishes a better setting, a substantial golden setting, for that faith.

Human sin : Divine forgiveness. Human sin is incident to the struggle upward of our race ; a struggle with our brute inheritance, and not the result of a primal fall, involving all souls. Divine forgiveness is in the very nature of God ; it does not rest upon any satisfaction to justice, as was assumed by the old Christian philosophy. For when we see the facts, now being more and more revealed, indicating the presence here of a Being working constructively, ever improving all that is improvable ; upholding all things by the out-play of His power, demonstrating thus an infinite graciousness, we are driven from a philosophy which taught that His love and grace were in some way purchasable.

The evolutionary philosophy means the revolution of the old philosophy. There can be no question in regard to that. The old philosophy regarded redemption as a "remedy applied for a fatal undoing" ; the new philosophy, as applied to religion, holds it to be a steady process by which God accomplishes the uplift of the race. The old philosophy took our nature to be in a state of ruin, from which God rebuilds it ; the new philosophy beholds God as building our nature from the first, not as rebuilding it.

It is impossible and unnecessary now to specify the ways in which the new undermines the old. But it is a philosophy which is being undermined, not a faith. A philosophy is something explanatory, giving reasons why, or attempting to do so. It is the most natural thing imaginable that the fathers of the church should have attempted this explanation ; it is equally natural and commendable that their explanation should

be put aside when it is found to be inadequate, and when another explanation is found which is adequate.

It appears to me most probable, as I said before, that the new philosophy will be accepted by the Christian church. But it will not be suddenly nor prematurely. Such a philosophy is not to be swallowed at a gulp by such a composite organization as the church. Already it is gaining ground in the various churches. It is approving itself to all students of it. The hot prejudice of twenty-five years ago has cooled very greatly in temperature. It is almost amusing to see how the very able and elaborate arguments of the assailants of the new philosophy, the pamphlets, octavo books, review articles and all, have become forever obsolete during the past decade. Not a few of these assailants regret the haste in which they identified evolution with atheism. Thus the work goes on. Alongside of the constructive march of evolution we behold the signs of the dissolution of the old philosophies, which having served their purpose pass away. Its old setting is crumbling away from the faith of the church; but the faith does not and cannot crumble. It is a radiant truth, shining by its own light. It is of the nature of an axiom.

When it was asserted that a whole was greater than any of its parts, there was no argument, or at any rate the statement was its own sufficient argument. Then when men went on with their mathematics up into the higher region of analysis and calculation, some timid soul might have felt an anxiety lest the axiom should be disproved or displaced. But it never has been and it never will be. It is the unshakable element upon which much depends. I think it is so with the faith of the church. The philosophy of the past was a

magnificent structure. The subtlety, the intellectual keenness and shrewdness and skill, the logical hair-splitting, the moral earnestness and greatness of purpose which wrought it out, are all admirable almost beyond our power of speech. So was the work of skill and art upon the temple at Jerusalem — beautiful and grand, indicative of a patient and capacious wisdom. Sturdy vines of beaten gold embraced and beautified the two pillars at the main entrance, forming a mass of golden foliage and fruitage overhead the incoming worshiper ; and the goodly stones of the temple were like the treasures of kings. Yet, said Jesus to his disciples, “ There shalt not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” So fall the skillful works of men. The past testifies to us of itself and its greatness by the ruins and wrecks which survive. But the faith of the past is constant, and it is this : God is love ; man His child ; the pure in heart shall see Him ; the sinner is forgiven ; blessed are they that make peace, and hunger for righteousness, and are humble of spirit ; blessed are they who follow the steps of Jesus. Around these glittering light-points the best philosophy of the past was gathered ; a concretion of the best that men could think in explanation of the partially disclosed facts of nature and history. But the greater disclosure of facts and principles now makes the old concretion obsolete.

A philosophy of religion which denies reasonableness is not the philosophy which can stay with us. A philosophy satisfactory to the highest intelligence of the fourth, the twelfth, the sixteenth centuries is not satisfactory to intelligence now. If the church shall now continue to impose that philosophy upon

men, it will divorce itself from intelligence, and bury its faith under superstition. It will force itself out of practical relation with the lives of the men who do the world's work, and so carry on the redemption-work of God. I do not believe that the church will so demit its sacred ministry. At the cost of struggle and debate, and perhaps of hot contention, it will come to recognize the work of God, in bringing in a philosophy which both befits the faith of the church and satisfies the reason of mankind.

X.

CHRISTIANITY INCLUDED.

“But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,” — GALATIANS iv. 4.

It is surprising, in one view of the case, to find that among people of intelligence and candor, and especially among religious persons, who ought to be intelligent and candid, there is a great deal of doubt of, not to say hostility to, the evolutionary philosophy.

This doubt and hostility arise from a variety of causes, but chiefly, I think, from a lack of attention, or even from a persistent determination not to investigate. Now, while it is true that the great majority of religious people have neither leisure nor the means for thorough investigation, and are compelled to depend upon others, it is a sad thing, involving many sad results, that the light which comes from the labors of others should be refused. It is a bad thing that Christian people should consent to be infidels.

The Christian church has presented its word of God to men, and has encountered a great amount of unbelief among men. It has therefore raised its complaint against the infidelity which declines the Divine word. It has a right to raise such a complaint. If the word of God is a light (and such it has proven to be to men and to nations), the rejection of it is a rejection of light. And a complaint ought to be raised against such rejection. But when the

advocates of the written record of revelation refuse the light that streams out to them from the unwritten revelation, there is a perfectly just complaint to be raised on the other side. That is as really infidelity as the other. If any one holds that God made the world, and the Cosmos, it would seem as if he must feel sure that the method of construction would come to be revealed, whenever men should have come to the ability to read the record. And this record, when read, would be free from all human imagination or misconception. No man put his thought into the stone of the lower geologic periods. Those records were all written by the finger of God. But when man began his course he put his feelings and ideas into the best form open to him. Both the feelings and the ideas and the form were necessarily imperfect, because he is a limited and imperfect being. God is not an imperfect being. What He has written is infallibly written. And this infallible writing we find in the great book of creation, whose pages begin to turn now for the inspection of man. Ought we not to have confidence in these inscriptions? Is it not a kind of infidelity in us which prompts us to decline to read what God has written?

There are those who live in a chronic suspicion of science. They seem to think that in the nature of the case a scientific man must be an infidel. Nothing farther from the truth could be well imagined. The scientific man, in his own department, would at once fail to be scientific if he were an infidel. He must believe the revelation as he reads it. When he turns a page of the record he does not think of doubting it. If his preconceived opinions are dashed in fragments by his discoveries, he sacrifices them. Were

he to maintain them, as against his findings, he would be compelled to leave the ranks of science, and give his attention to something else. He does indeed doubt the sayings of men as to those matters upon which they had insufficient information. But your scientific man is cautious, and exact, and true to the revelation he finds in God's book of nature. It is very evident, therefore, that very great weight ought to be given to the work of such men. They are entitled to a credit which comparatively few of the religious world are willing to accord them.

But it is objected by religious men that science is not yet mature; it is in a state of transition. The older science has been put to shame and discredit; how do we know but that the new science will likewise prove itself altogether fallible and unworthy of confidence? "After you have got everything settled and beyond dispute, then we will give some heed to what you have to say." Well, the new science does cast the old into the shade. In fact the old is as good as non-existent. There has been a state of transition, but that is passing. Confusion and lack of agreement have characterized the march of science. But that too is passing. "When you can all come to agreement," cries the religious unbeliever, "then we will think it worth our while to consider what you have to tell us, but not before!"

Is the religious world in agreement? Is it not in as great a disagreement as ever? Here is the word of God, wonderfully preserved through the changes and convulsions of centuries. It is translated into all modern tongues. It is studied with a minute attention, microscopically. Do all religious people agree with respect to it? If there is anything in which religious

people do not agree it is in their religion. They all derive it from the same book, and they differ as widely as scientific men have ever differed. But I would have you note one thing, most worthy of your consideration ; the scientific people have come to practical concord upon the subject of evolution. About ninety-nine one hundredths of them, as is now estimated, are evolutionists. After persons reach an advanced age it is rare for them to change their opinions. Their minds are no longer flexible but fixed. You can safely locate most of the one hundredth portion of the scientific men who do not accept evolution among the aged. But their work days are over. So that the very thing religious men have declared they would wait for has come to pass ; namely, the substantial agreement of scientific men in regard to the general outcome of their science.

Moreover, the hypothesis of evolution is the only working hypothesis for physical science. Take away the theory and you set back medical science a long way ; you set back biology all the way, so that there is nothing of it left. Take away evolution from any of the progressive researches of men, and you have withered or frozen those researches. No such incalculable mischief could befall your student of to-day as to compel him to prosecute his studies without the aid and light of evolution. He might translate Homer as well, or demonstrate his geometry propositions ; but these things have little to do with the outsearchings of the present time. You are powerless to understand history, it is a mere collection of facts, without coherence, except as you view it as a continuous unfolding of the higher from the lower. You have broken the links, and destroyed the conti-

nuity, unless history is an unfolding. A mere collection of facts is nothing, or next to nothing, so far as science or actual knowledge is concerned.

You are aware that students of manuscripts can determine the dates of manuscript copies of the New Testament, approximately, by the kind of letters made by the scribe. They can thus tell you which is the older of two manuscripts. If you go into a geologist's workshop you may see there a box of stones. The stones have been thrown into a box promiscuously. To your eyes, merely a box of stones. Ask your geologist about them. He picks up one and reads its date. It belongs to such a period. He picks up another and gives the date of that:—long periods between the two. One is above the other, higher in the scale. That is to say, the man of science reads the revelation of these things to you. So that the box of stones is after all a book of revelation. Now then, take away all idea of relation out of your geologist's mind; erase the law of the relation of things in time (which is the law of evolution), and the significant record is reduced to a box of stones. Wooden box, pieces of rock, and your geologist gone out of existence. A person is left who goes around in a foolish manner and picks up stones and puts them in a box.

Religion is looked upon by many, has been looked upon for ages, as a something given forth from heaven, full, perfect, complete. No growth or development of it possible. If you will think of it, such a view of religion is flatly contradicted by experience, by history (which is experience classified), and by common sense. Say that there is no evolution of religion, and try to comprehend the teaching of Christ with respect to

Judaism or with respect to later times. Christ begins and finishes His mission of revelation. Does He cast discredit upon the essentials of the precedent religion? Does He undertake to clear that religion away? On the contrary, He honors it. He not only proposes to let it stand, but asserts its Divine authority. A certain law of equal justice had obtained, expressed in these words, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." It was a high law of retaliation, forcing the retaliation to take the form of an equivalent injury. It was fit for the regulation of such society as then existed. Christ proposed a higher and better society, the time then being ripe for it. There must be a better law of relation in this new society. And so He developed the law of equal justice into the law of patience and love. But the law of justice is not repealed. When a blossom smiles from the branch of a tree, the branch is not repealed; the tree and the root remain.

The sentiment of justice comes gradually into existence among men. It does not come suddenly, but gradually, and as the result of many causes and experiences. God brings it to be, as we find He brings other sentiments and feelings to be. This sentiment of justice becomes the seed or root out of which grows a law of conduct, more and more answering the real purpose of justice; that is, more and more developing toward equal justice or equitable retaliation. And then finally comes the outgrowth of the law of Christ. But if you subtract the law of justice from the law of Christ, nothing substantial is left. A love regardless of justice is a degenerate and ever-degenerating sentiment. So the prime teachings of the elder religion were not set aside, they were drawn out into

farther development. The old law was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy." The new law extended the province of love. In its earlier development love is not strong, but weak. Its radius of activity is small. The new law dissolves its circumference. And so all the way through the teachings of Christ you will discover His work to be that of enlarging the old. Not the exterior things of the old, to which He was indifferent, but the interior principles of the old are made the basis of the new. I suppose that all will admit so much as that. That is to say, the doctrine of evolution, as applied to the foundation of the Christian religion, is found to be a real, working hypothesis.

The march of evolution from the foundation of the Christian religion is discovered to be a Niagara stream — impossible to put a stop to. It is in the constitution of our minds, as it is in all natural constitution, to develop and grow. Witness the history of the church. The energy of the church, ever increasing, put itself at once in certain directions of evolution. We have already, in a previous chapter, marked the development of the philosophy of the church. Let us now note the development of the outward form, or organization of it. Jesus, in the prosecution of His work, did not undertake to do it alone; He called others to take their part in the great mission for the salvation of the world. He seems not to have anticipated any personal success in the doing of His work. On the other hand, He expected defeat. But the work would go on. That it might go on, He called to His side the fisherman and the tax-gatherer. The Head of the church, with His twelve apostles, walked abroad in Galilee, in Samaria, in the borders of Tyre, and in

Judea. Rome was the centre of the world; this region was one of the outlying parishes of the great empire. Christ did not seek the aid or encouragement of the learned, nor the rich, nor the powerful. All He sought was to finish His work, His teaching, His doing good, His suffering. This was to be the root of a farther development. I think it is safe to say that in no teacher of religion has there ever been witnessed so sublime a faith in that great law which has but so recently been brought into prominence,—the law of development. He recognized Himself as a seed, to fall into the ground of the moral life of the world, and die. Except for this death, the life of the seed is not set free to grow on and on. He confidently expected this growth. And His expectation has been amply justified by the event.

But the development of the church has been largely along lines of externality. It was in philosophy. It came to be in organization. The twelve fisher people, animated at length by a Christly purpose, had their petty ambitions,—growing less, while their Christly purpose grew greater. They went abroad out of the old narrow boundaries of Palestine. Went westward, to Rome, perhaps as far as Spain. Tradition has it that one of them went eastward as far as the Indus. They bore their great message to populations of which as simple fishermen they had been ignorant. So the growth or development went on. Efforts were made to stop this new progress. Persecutions arose. But it was a Niagara stream, overleaping obstructions and gaining power day by day. Then came the sense of the need of organization meeting the requirements of so vast a body. Our twelve have their successors. Out of the simple apostleship came the more elaborate

bishopric. During the early days at Jerusalem, seven had been appointed deacons to take charge of a portion of the work for which the apostles had not leisure. And so, from these two orders came other orders and a greater elaboration of these orders themselves. In three centuries heathenism finds itself in a minority, or at least in an inefficient and unpromising majority in the empire. It surrenders the eagles to the cross.

And now behold how the evolution of organization goes on. With what rapid strides, — with what astounding transformations. Foot-sore pedestrians, in fishers' coats, are succeeded by throned magnates in fine apparel. Those who had stood before kings, sometimes with chains upon them, giving their brave testimony to their Master, are succeeded by bishop courtiers, who take their station behind kings and governors, and pull the strings of government. The petty ambitions of the twelve apostles, suppressed in them, begin to be developed in the towering ambitions of prelates. The desire to be first, or chief, develops in the creation of a bishopric above the equal grade: the chair of St. Peter is set up, and the occupant assumes the function of a father of the Christian world. Out of so small and lowly a root had grown so lofty a tree! The father-bishop at Rome grasps at the sceptre of universal authority. He proposes that his seat shall be the throne of supremacy. The development goes on, branching and rebranching. The church as an institution develops mainly in body. Its energy appears to tend mostly in that direction. Accordingly there is a decreasing growth of its inner life and spiritual power; yet the law of evolution holds good. Out of the seed grows the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear, and embellished with tiara and other insignia.

The Roman chief bishop, in whom all this body-growth heads itself, with all his prerogatives, powers, honors, reaches the point of full growth, as all things ultimately do, and is not to be borne with longer without rebuke and limitation. So begins a protestation against him and his belongings. Sharp investigation of all this highly organized body, leads to discovery of fatal deficiencies in it; of a lack of anything like a vital soul in it. The successor of St. Peter is found to be a successor to the office of St. Peter, or say some formula of St. Peter, and not of the apostolic spirit. It has become high time to take up this neglected, undeveloped soul of the Christian body, to try what may be done for that. A new start is given to the idea of righteousness. It had been made in some sort a bodily interest. That is, the duty of man was to do things of a ceremonial order, to confess sins to a priest, and get words of absolution from him, to give due heed to masses, and prayer repetitions. But there arises a reformation of all that. The soul of man is in direct relation with the soul of the universe, with God; and therefore requires, more than all else, faith. In place of the outward, the inward. I do not say that the reformers gave the world a true or perfect conception of faith; they simply restored this word of inward power to prominence. If you look well to it, you will not fail to discover that the tendency of moral beings, as we know them, is to develop the outward at the expense of the inward. But the inward, the spiritual, the moral, as we have found, is the goal toward which creation ever moves. There may be interruption, — as indeed there has been, — or rather evolution may run for a time mainly in other directions. But in some direction it goes on with resistless cur-

rent. Christianity developed to grand proportions outwardly, as we have seen. The outward ever precedes the inward.

So, too, when Protestantism began, it grew into a manifold Protestantism. The solidarity of the one church being broken, the development is toward individualism and freedom of faith. The evolution of Christianity is as marked as the evolution of any other history, physical, intellectual, or moral, if one will be at pains to trace it. Of course it is more difficult to trace, because it is more complex than other developments; but the history of Christianity furnishes no ground to doubt the universality of the law. I am aware that to many minds the origin of Christianity appears to be a most critical point, at which either the evolutionist will cease to be an evolutionist, or the Christian will cease to be a Christian in order to be an evolutionist instead. We are told that there is ground which cannot be occupied by an evolutionist and a Christian. Well, in the growth of the evolutionary philosophy we observe a similar critical point, located at the creation of man.

When the proofs had been unfolded from the geological records, and were found to be overwhelming, then the reluctant Christian philosopher made an admission. Evolution granted in all that precedes man upon the earth, but denied at that point. Man is a special creation. That was the battle field of some years ago. But when it came to be seen by the theistic evolutionist who had come thus far, that the creation of man is in any case the work of God, whether by rapid special process, or by the evolution of ages, the point was yielded. It was seen that the hypothesis of evolution must regard man as the creature of God.

Now the battle field locates itself at the person of Christ. To refer the Christ in any sense to evolution; to account for Him on evolutionary ground, it has over and over again been asserted, is to surrender the citadel of the Christian religion, and consequently to abandon Christianity. But this assertion, in which the enemies of Christianity unite with some of its friends, has been hastily made, and I am sure without due and deep consideration.

If evolution were a blind force, operating through time and space, if it were not the direct and continuous work of God at all points, and if it did not indicate a supreme purpose and a goal, then it would have nothing to tell us about the Christ. But the mode of God in doing things, in causing things to come to pass, we call evolution. However obscure the method may be, or however little we may be able, with our present light to understand it, the evolutionist believes, as an article of faith, that all events are in accord with that universal law. He cannot see how, in many cases, but he is still confident. The birth of all living beings is accordant with the law of evolution; but the higher we ascend in the scale of being the more wonderful becomes the birth, the more wonderful becomes the progress after the birth. And therefore the more reason is there to ascribe the birth and the after progress to God. He who realized God, as none others have done, He who hesitated not to speak of Himself as the Son of God, and who declared that He and His Father were one, upon what ground did He thus speak? Was it upon the ground of His own consciousness, or upon some ground exterior to His consciousness? It must have been upon the ground of His own consciousness, since He seems never to have spoken upon any other.

But was there nothing before Him to explain that consciousness? Had it no root in any previous consciousness of men? Look back in the Hebrew annals and see. The great and good men of the nation had it, and by it predicted the coming of One who should realize it completely. Then consider, for it is well worth consideration, the evolution of Jesus from infancy to manhood. How He grew in stature, in age, and in the Divine consciousness. How His mind must have been nourished upon the sacred wisdom of the past is sufficiently evidenced by the narrative. How He had His education, that He might become the educator of mankind; how He partook of the common temptations and sorrows of men, that He might be their faithful priest, we gather from the sacred writings. But a feeling has prevailed that in order duly to honor God the Creator, you must imagine Him remote from His works, in a lofty transcendency. So too it has been felt necessary to make an exception in favor of the Son of God, as if He were not in the realm and order of Nature, as if a certain verbal statement of His Absolute Divine Royalty ought to be made, and reiterated, as an article of faith. It has been felt necessary to declare His equality with God, in terms of quantity, *a declaration which He Himself does not make.*¹ Now, as a matter of fact and of philosophy, we know nothing, except in a negative way, of Divine quantity. We simply affirm of God that He is the absolute, the not finite, and there we leave the subject, unable to penetrate into it. Divinity in terms of *quantity* utterly baffles us; in terms of *quality* it meets us at every step of reverent thought. It blesses

¹ The declaration Jesus made (John xiv. 28) is quantitative: "My Father is greater than I."

us with the blessings of a spiritual experience: it teaches us to know the Son of God, by being ourselves led by the Spirit of God, and therefore the sons of God (Romans viii. 14).

The philosophies of the past have been compelled to present to the faith of men an impossible Christ; impossible, not because He did wonderful works, but because the whole of the infinite was compressed within the limits of the finite. That is impossible to thought. The words which say it are meaningless words.

On the other hand, the new philosophy applied to religion attempts nothing of the kind. It presents us with the idea of a vast purpose, of which we can think, because we are led to it gradually, by orderly steps. This purpose may be expressed in words;—the Incarnation of God. The flower, the fruit-bearing tree, the fish, the bird of the air, the mammalian animal, each in its own way, and according to its capacity, individuates the Eternal Energy. In man the beginning of the incarnation takes place, so that the Evangelist Luke does not hesitate to speak of Adam as the son of God. In Christ Jesus the incarnation finds its fulfillment, but not, as we learn from the lips of His Apostles, its completion. All the highest and best of the past came to consciousness in Him, else He had no use for the past.

And is that all? Was not God in Him? Why, you see the evolutionary philosophy cannot get along at all without God, or the Eternal Energy (these two terms, God, or Eternal Energy, being employed according to the theistic or the materialistic bias of the particular philosopher). Seeing what Jesus was, what things He said, and what things He did, and what death He died, the evolutionary philosophy helps us

more clearly to apprehend that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." For here is a moral race to be brought from the perverseness of its self-will to the will of God, and this is the great work of the incarnation. It is not the forcing process from without; it is the inducing and educating process from within, which the new philosophy and the gospel recognize as the sublime purpose of creation.

Christ and Christianity were not bolted into the world, arbitrarily; they were born, and that in a fullness of time. In other words, they came according to that law which comprehends all knowable laws, the law of evolution. They were born to testify, not God's power, but His presence. The Divine gospel of to-day, more than ever before, is the Emanuel gospel, the God-with-us gospel. And since the law of life is one of increase, we may well be thrilled with the hope that the spirit of Christ shall become more and more incarnate, until all shall acknowledge and confess it, to the glory of God the Father.

XI.

PRAYER.

“Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek and ye shall find ; knock and it shall be opened unto you.” — MATTHEW vii. 7, 8.

THE direction to ask, or seek, or knock, you will observe, is based upon a principle. This principle appears at first to be a mere repetition of the direction. But upon further consideration it will be seen that the principle is general. In every department of intelligent energy the asker is answered, the seeker finds. If, therefore, we discover that the principle is universal, we shall be compelled to assent to the particular application of it made in Christ's words. I shall merely attempt to show how prominently the human will intrudes itself in the affairs of our part of the universe, and how necessary this intrusion is. Reference is made, but incidentally, to the evolutionary philosophy.

Thinkers of a certain class appear to be on the lookout for the disappearance of religion. Every step which science takes in advance is to them so much progress toward the dissolution of faith. To them, evidently, science is daylight, and religion is darkness: as day comes night goes. It is an unfortunate, not to say unreasonable, state of mind. Why, science itself is greatly dependent upon classification. It is the function of science to separate things which are separable ; to analyze. Our human nature is a unity, but

it is a unity of various distinct departments. Our nature is not one story high; it is more than a basement. The whole of life does not belong to the kitchen; it extends upward, into regions of art and imagination; into regions of ethics and philosophy; into regions of spirituality and religion. These superior developments are our distinctively human elements; they distinguish us from animals. If they are to be cut off, or to become extirpated by disuse, there will be an end of science as well; since in that case there will be nothing left of us capable or desirous of looking into the meaning of things. We have the religious department of our nature; it has developed along lines of unspeakable trouble and pain and conquest. To ignore this department, to think that it will disappear, or in fact to consent to be ourselves irreligious or unreligious, is, to my mind, to be fatally unreasonable.

I should count that man near lunacy who should welcome some new invention, such as the application of hydrogen gas in the lighting of dwellings, as promising to drive out music! Or if any one were to say that the office of prose is to abolish poetry. Or that the precise thinking of the mathematician were destined to banish the imagination. I venture to suppose that as prose extends itself, and embodies more and more ideas, and enriches language, it will in due time give an immense impetus to poetry.

Now in regard to prayer, which belongs to religion as the multiplication table belongs to mathematics, it has been asserted time and again that it will go out of use, in proportion as reasonable and scientific ideas of nature prevail. To many, I have no doubt, prayer is but a superstition, and quite as baseless as any other

superstition. A great deal can be said against it. The earth revolves on its axis, giving us the alternations of day and night. It passes on its track around the sun, giving us the regular alternations of the seasons. This orderly sequence of day and night — this procession of seasons — may seem to some person not of the highest intelligence to be in some manner harmful to him. He would prefer for some personal reason to have the winter last all the year, in this zone. That will be favorable to him in his peculiar kind of employment. Or for the same reason he would like to have no night for a month at a stretch. Now if the theory of prayer be a true one, why cannot this man appeal to the Creator and Upholder of all things, the Lord of all, to change things for his benefit? If it be urged that one has a perfect right to make such a prayer as that, but that it is quite another thing to get it answered, then we are compelled to declare that if prayer is anything more than a mere form, if it has any reality whatever, it must include the idea of an answer. In other words, if prayer has come to us as one of the teachings of religion, we ought not to abate or lessen its significance.

The simplest idea is the one which will enlighten us. The child asks the parent for something; the subject asks the king for something. The parent or the monarch hears the request and responds to it, in one way or another. Men ask the omnipotent God for that which they desire, and He heeds their request, and responds to it. Certainly that is the way in which we think most naturally of prayer. The heathen offers his gifts and prefers his wish to his idol, and he does it under the hope of getting what he desires. In the lowest kind of worship, among the savage

tribes, something is done to procure favorable influence from the fetish, or the object of worship. However the notion came, it has come, and it is fitting that we should study into it. No doubt many intelligent people have learned to look upon prayer as a superstition, akin to the belief in ghosts and the like. There are reasons why intelligent persons should look at the matter in that way. An examination of those reasons may lead us to see that there are reasons which bear the other way, and which deserve consideration.

We will then assume that there is over all a perfectly wise Governor of the universe, — a Being in whom there is no imperfection of purpose nor lack of knowledge. This Being has been creating our world by a process whose very slowness seems to us all but infinite. Uncountable generations of species have come and gone, and all obedient to the one will. No human will has intervened. Or look out at the sky. A bewildering host of stars and worlds and suns are there, so nicely balanced, so accurately adjusted, that a finite being can only wonder, and determine that he for his part will not in any wise interfere. It is said that when the preliminary arrangements were all completed for the blasting of the obstructions at Hell Gate in the East River, a child's finger completed the electric circuit which produced the enormous explosion. This was all very well, under competent supervision, — but to give a child the opportunity to cause such explosions at its own good will and pleasure, would seem to be hazardous in the extreme. So would it seem a most unwise arrangement that finite beings, and especially very immature, inexperienced, and mistaken human beings, should be given any place, even the smallest, in the conduct of the universe. Then

too it would be asked why any right-minded finite being should desire to have a hand in the conduct of the universe. If a man really has faith in God, a faith worth calling such, believing that God is absolutely wise and perfect in power, will he not say, "I have no wish to intrude my little petty and most imperfect notions upon such a being. I can be content in nothing less than this; that God shall manage and govern all the heavens not only, but all the earth, my part of it as well as every other part. I have nothing of any sort to ask of God. I would not have Him change anything in the fraction of a grain for me." Is not that a humble and beautiful state of mind? It would appear so. The only trouble of it is that it is not a genuine and consistent state of mind. It does not correspond with the facts.

We will conceive our humble-minded man who does not at all desire to intrude his bit of a will upon the general universe, of which he is such an insignificant part, to have got himself into a great forest, he with his axé and gun and ammunition and other things. We will not even ask how he got there,—but simply what he will do now that he has found himself there. Now God made the great forest, and it abides in silence by His will. This man has his own will, and proceeds to set his powers in operation by direction of that will. He breaks the primeval silence, and finding trees growing vertically, standing there strong-rooted, he plies his axe and brings them down. He builds a dwelling-place for himself. He hunts abroad for the beasts, roaming in their freedom, and so gets his food. He vigorously sets in train his various operations, and in due time changes that forest; clears away the wood, pulls out the stumps, prepares the ground, puts in

seed, reaps his harvests, and so altogether changes the condition of things. But he is the man who declared that for his part he did not wish to intrude his will at all in the conduct of the universe or of any part of it. What has he been doing all the time? From the moment when he entered the forest, from the moment when he started to go to the forest, to say nothing of any previous time, he has been doing nothing but intruding his will in the conduct of the universe. He gets other persons to come to his aid. He and they continue their operations on an increasing scale. They find wet places in the soil, and drain off the water. They find dry places and irrigate them. Finding no houses, they make them. After a time, in place of the silent forest, there will come to be a city, with its markets, its newspapers, its courts of law, its paved streets, its noise. A perpetual intrusion of the will of the finite being in the conduct of the universe. And every rational being must needs admit that the intrusion is not without beneficent results. Man looks abroad over the fields of the earth and discovers, among other things, clay. An inert subsoil. He says to himself that he will make a use of the clay differing from the common uses of nature. He takes it, and moulds it into fit form, and bakes it in a form of bricks, and builds it up into the sky. He procures silicates and other substances, and makes glass for windows, fashions the wood of the forest into proper casings, gets iron and hammers it into nails, or casts it into hinges or locks and other fixtures. He takes these substances out of the conditions where the will of God has apparently left them, and proceeds to refashion them. He takes simples and makes composites. He takes the coal out of the bed of it,

and burns it in his furnaces. And from beginning to end he is doing one thing, — intruding his intent into the affairs of the universe. And it is visible that the more he intrudes, the more he accomplishes for the benefit of his race.

And not only so. This feeble creature, named man, undertakes to lay his hand upon the great forces of nature. There are certain ascertainable facts concerning the sun which would be impressive if we could only image their massive meaning in our imagination. Each second the radiation of heat from the sun is sufficient to melt a piece of ice, say three hundred millions of cubic miles big.¹ This would indicate something of the immensity of the mass of the sun if we only had even a faint conception of what a million of cubic miles might be. So, too, when we say of the sun that its diameter is more than a hundred times as great as that of our earth, that would be quite a piece of information if we could frame in our imagination what the diameter of our earth is. But because we have so very unreal an idea of the size of our earth we must have a much more unreal image of the size of the sun, in our mind. A ship of six or seven thousand tons is a monster. But what shall we say of the tons of the sun? There is just about nothing to say, and very little to think. Well, these vast weights, of which we try to think, and fail, since we cannot imagine them in our minds, are held, if we may so speak, by a force; and this force is so enormous that it holds a sun, or a thousand suns, as a child holds the string of a little kite. Can the little man-creature put his finger on this giant and say, "Obey me"? It is precisely what he does. Gravity holds the heavy things

¹ Professor Tyndall, *Fragments of Science*.

to the earth. Man says, "I will put forth my power now," and he pulls against the illimitable, and succeeds in pulling away from it. He raises these tons upon tons of ponderable material, puts his prop under them, and then says to Gravity,— "Hold that for me, will you?" and Gravity does it. Then the fire goes flashing and crashing through the sky, or runs its race through the hush of space with a speed which is not a speed, but a presence, and man runs the risk of burning his fingers meddling with this fire energy, but finally fastens his string upon it, and says, "Carry my greetings to my friend over the ocean," or, "Light my street for me," or, "Speak my words for me where I bid you." Daring creature is this, — who, however, says, when you ask him, that he will not venture to intrude his poor feelings and his feeble wisdom on the notice of the Most High. He will not venture to intrude, he meekly says; and it appears that he does almost nothing of worth or of help, certainly nothing of progress, which is not in fact the intrusion of his finite will into the conduct of the universe. This intrusion has become a pretty general thing, and is growing both more general and more particular, as the time goes on. What is all this doing of things called for to be done, this change of the face and substance of nature in manifold fashions, but our continuing and increasing intrusion of our will? It may be more than that, but certainly it is that.

Mirabeau said: "Nothing is impossible to the man who can will."

An extravagant manner of speech, but not without its true meaning to us, if we are able to take it.

But was not man made to be under the laws of nature? Well, when you talk of the laws of nature you

are broaching a large subject. Laws of nature are the methods of the Eternal Energy exercising itself, the materialistic philosopher will tell you. And he is right so far as he goes. The laws of nature are the ways in which God does things, is what the theistic philosopher says. But God's ways of doing things are adaptive. There is a law for water; it seeks a level; there is quite a different law for a rational being, in virtue of which he considers. He has his law of thinking, as the water has its law of flowing. Following this law he is able to make the law of water serviceable to himself. For while the water is obeying its law of getting to its level, he puts his wheel in it, and the water turns it; and he puts his bands and wheels in such places and relations as that the water shall grind his corn, or move his spindles. The law of the man is that he shall govern the water. God set it flowing in rivers, or ebbing and flooding in the tides. Man takes advantage of these motions; he is by his nature imperial, a commander; the winds and the waves obey him.

From of old there has been a doctrine of Divine Providence. How did it come? It must have come in some way out of our human experience. It has been honestly said that God will not override His own laws of nature; that He certainly will respect them as He commands men to do. That is a truth unto which we do well that we take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place. God will not override His own laws. If we human creatures attempt revolt against the laws of nature, we get into trouble. It is for us to find out what the laws of nature are, and act according to them. I do not mean that we are to be enslaved by them; the very contrary of that. Let any one try to

deal with a wild bear as he would with a domestic sheep, and serious results will be sure to follow. The law of nature in a grizzly bear is not the same as the law of nature in a tame sheep, and the wise person will pay particular attention to the wild-bear-law when he has something to do with a wild bear. There is a certain law of projectiles which he will bring into requisition. It is by a proper respect for the law of the grizzly bear's actions a man rises superior to the bear.

We find the laws of nature to be laws of advantage after we begin to dream how comprehensive they are. But at first laws of nature were dreaded and feared. If a hunter tumbled off a ledge of rocks and was crushed, his friends felt bitterly about it. They said, "That is a bad law which breaks the bones of your friends." But in due time that feeling changes. Foresight is required — providence — to use all these laws advantageously. The laws are good, but some are higher and some are lower. Every law is wholesome and good if employed according to its quality and intention.

Now as men go on to impose their will more and more upon the laws of nature, they acquire a habit of providing. They learn human providence, and gradually learn to infer a Divine Providence. By the right use of our will we go on to develop the higher laws of life. Things which appeared impossible become possible. There are inventors; we call them such because they find principles, laws, relations. Nature is full of powers, as it were, concealed or latent, waiting for some one to find them and bring them into applicability. Go back a hundred years and the world of possibilities was small. Inventors have arisen who have been finding a great number of possibilities. They have

gone into the range of impossibilities and taken many things out of it. There has been a mighty development. Men looked at things and said, "They are of no value" — but out of these things have come immense values. All of which, and much more to the same purpose, suggests vast resources in nature, or an infinitely comprehensive providence.

Christ said, "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find;" and modern science yields more abundant proof that it is true than anciently could have been afforded. Men have asked, asserting thus their finite will, and they have been answered; — they have sought, and found much more than they sought. I am sure that prayer, therefore, is not only not unreasonable, but that properly regarded it is in the highest degree reasonable.

But prayer has been objected to by men of science; it has been proposed, notably by Professor Tyndall, to subject the matter to a scientific test. Certainly it is right that all things of so great importance should be tested, but I think the test proposed by Professor Tyndall insufficient. It is easy even for scientific persons to make this mistake of recognizing a man as a priest because he habitually wears the coat and hat of a priest, and of failing to recognize a real priest as such because he has not the priestly garb and does not appear to exercise a priestly function.

Prayer, too, is difficult to identify, except by its fruits. There is probably a great amount of human utterance, purporting to be prayer, and named of men prayer, which has little or nothing of prayer in it. All that goes by rote or habit, and really engages nothing of the utterer's will, and does not signify the desire of the worshiper to have a share in the conduct

of the universe, is not prayer. I do not deny that such service may have a use, — ritual, educational, and for the purposes of orderly worship. I simply affirm it not to be prayer. All human prayer at best is imperfect, but whether less imperfect or more, it is a wish, deepening into a will, to have certain results accomplished. These results may not be accomplished ; it may be of the highest importance that they should not be accomplished ; but the wish, or the will, constitutes the prayer a real prayer. A true parent will respond to the wish of a child when it is wise so to do, not otherwise. If men ask God for that which is not best, their prayer will not be answered, but it is prayer nevertheless.

Now, could we uncover prayer of all its verbal expression, we would find it to be the wish or will of men pressing on to get itself realized. Christ alluded to those who thought they would be heard for their much speaking. Really one is not heard for much speaking or little. It is the will that counts. And we have already seen that the will of man, finite, imperfect being that he is, does count for much.

According to the evolutionary philosophy the human will must have its roots or genesis in certain animal instincts ; and a wonderful thing it is even in these roots. The beaver has its civil engineering ; the bee its architecture ; the spider its geometric tracery ; the ant military, civic, and industrial society ; all crowded into one term in our language, — instinct ; and all most surprising to us when carefully considered. I suppose we will all consent that back of this instinct and its wondrous productions lies the Eternal Energy, or let us say the Divine Power, Intelligence, and Will, so far manifesting themselves. When we rise from these

miracles of instinct through eons of development to the will of man, what shall we say of that? Does not the Divine will most individuate itself in this altogether wonderful human will? Then for this human will to be educated or developed to freely express and do the Divine will, is any consummation greater than that? Our will asserts itself in myriads of ways, mysteriously. My will acts upon matter: I raise my arm; I know not how. From that on to the felling of forests, and the creation of the complex civilized state, is the manifold operation of human will. No doubt all this is the operation too of the Divine will, but then it is through the channel of the human will; so and not otherwise. That the human will should correspond with the Divine will; that it should get itself into such correspondence, is therefore the one thing needful. And precisely that is what prayer is for. There are those who claim that it is as impossible for a human will to go counter to the Divine will as for a beaver or a bee to do so. I simply revert to our common experience of ability to choose as a refutation of that.

The eternal righteousness above us, and we seeking to do righteously! Whether we realize it or not, our seeking to do righteously is itself prayer. And if the religious world be full of affectations of prayers, formulas of prayer, postures and inflections of prayer; and if the prevalence of such outwardness has rendered many oblivious of the inwardness of prayer; yet it remains true that at the bottom prayer is a seeking to use our will in the affairs of life, the affairs of the universe, therefore; and right prayer is the seeking to use our wills righteously. If there are thousands who think they pray, and pray not at all, but merely

have some formula of prayer, there may be other thousands who do not know that they pray, disowning all formulas, who do nevertheless pray, because they seek the reform or betterment of society — do themselves seek to act righteously. They are praying the greatest of all prayers: “Thy kingdom come: thy will be done on earth as in heaven.”

XII.

MIRACLES AND SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT.

“And when the multitudes were gathering together unto him, he began to say, This generation is an evil generation ; it seeketh after a sign.” — LUKE xi. 29.

OUR generation demands reasonableness in religion, and not a sign. While there are multitudes of religious persons who do not at all feel the stress of the demand, there are other multitudes who do feel it most acutely. And they are on the increase. The more generally the reasoning faculties are developed, the more value will be given them. The greater will be the revulsion against unreasonableness. If the choice is given a person, of well-developed reasoning faculties, of accepting an unreasonable religion, or of going without religion, he is very likely to go without a religion. And he does so upon conscientious grounds. If you tell a man that he must accept some dogma of religion, and that man knows, or seems to himself to know, that the dogma is not true, then of course in all good conscience he is compelled to reject your dogma. He must do that or else play false. If he plays false, and accepts your dogma, the religion is vitiated. On the other hand, a person whose reasoning faculties are less developed can in good conscience accept your dogma. It is right for him to accept it, and wrong for the other man.

Imagine, if you please, such a case as this. We

will suppose that some body of religious people has come to the conclusion that it is necessary to believe that the earth ceased to revolve upon its axis for a number of hours, at the command of a military leader, some centuries ago. They have made up their minds, upon grounds amply sufficient to them, that a religious person must believe that story, or he cannot be truly religious. They proceed to examine some one who desires to connect himself with them in a life of religious faith and activity. "Do you believe in Jesus Christ?" "Yes." "Do you devote yourself with sincerity and a full consecration of yourself to living the life which He taught and lived?" "Yes, by the help of God, I have consecrated myself to the purpose of living that life, in the spirit of it." "Do you believe that the earth once stopped revolving on its axis, so as to permit Joshua to conquer heathen enemies?" "Yes, I believe that." But the candidate does in no measure appreciate the enormous difficulties of believing such a thing as that. To him it is perfectly simple. God is infinite in power and resources, he says, and He can make a day forty hours long, as well as twelve. The man's reason has not grappled at all with the great principles involved; he sees no difficulty, and he accepts the religion loaded with such a burden.

We will suppose Professor Tyndall to appear before the commission for examination. "Mr. Tyndall, do you approve the life and character of Jesus Christ?" "Yes." "Is it your purpose to govern your life by the principles He taught? Do you wish to further those principles? And will you devote your life to that?" "As I understand the teachings of Jesus Christ, — the real intent of them I do most thoroughly believe in, and I endeavor to live them, and to influence others

toward them, and into them." "You are a man of science?" "Yes." "Do you believe the earth stood still upon its axis, in the days of Joshua, the Israelite?" Mr. Tyndall answers in these words (they are in fact his words): "There is a scientific as well as a historic imagination; and when, by the exercise of the former, the stoppage of the earth's rotation is clearly realized, the event assumes proportions so vast, in comparison with the result to be attained by it, that belief reels under the reflection. The energy here involved is equal to that of six trillions of horses working for the whole of the time employed by Joshua in the destruction of his foes. The amount of power thus expended would be sufficient to supply every individual of an army a thousand times the strength of that of Joshua, with a thousand times the fighting power of each of Joshua's soldiers, not for the few hours necessary to the extinction of a handful of Amorites, but for millions of years." For the reason that a vast lavish expenditure of force was wasted, and for other reasons, Mr. Tyndall is unable to believe that story. Now, Mr. Tyndall has in an exceptional degree developed those faculties of judgment and of reason with which he is gifted. He is therefore compelled to eliminate the palpably unreasonable from his thinking. And if the issue is to be that he must accept an unreasonable (to him) dogma, — or be deprived of religion altogether, he will in all honesty be forced to forego religion. It is noticeable that Mr. Tyndall explicitly denies having a wish to limit the outgoings of Almighty power; but he is compelled to conduct his thinking in the light of reason. Now were such a process as I have indicated to be carried on, to the exclusion of men of developed reason from the

benefits of religion, more and more, it is obvious that the time would soon come when intelligence or reason would be regarded with positive hostility by religious persons, and religious society would gradually sink into ignorance, if not mental imbecility. And inasmuch as it appears to be the purpose of Almighty God that knowledge shall be increased, the intelligence of the world would become an irreligious power altogether; and it would be but a question of brief time when religion should be blotted from the earth.

This is a most grave matter — the gravest that now confronts us in connection with religion. As knowledge increases it is inevitable that views will modify. No matter how stout the opposition; no matter how much danger may be apprehended by religious people from the modification of opinions, we have come to the time when we face the most fundamental of changes in opinion. To the Christian evolutionist this change, amounting to a thorough reconstruction of theology, is simply the work of God continuing. To him it is more wonderful, because more thinkable, than any miracle.

It is on account of the great increase of intelligence, and of the growing conception of the reign of law in the universe, that our age has actually become intolerant of miracles. Long ago a miracle was as reasonable almost as anything else. And even in quite recent times, enlightened people, like the English, were believers in witchcraft. The weight of testimony, two centuries ago, was in favor of such a belief. And those whose opinions are of actual worth do form them according to the weight of testimony. The eminent and enlightened Sir Matthew Hale sentenced two women to be hung, because guilty of witchcraft. He held, in

determining the case, that Scripture affirmed the reality of witchcraft, and that the wisdom of nations had provided laws against witches. Sir Thomas Browne, the distinguished physician and author, testified in the case that he believed the persons complaining were bewitched.¹ Could you find courts in Christendom now holding such opinions, and executing unfortunate persons under the sanctions of them? The ground has been cleared of such opinions by the development of intelligence. We have been putting Nature into the witness-box; we have more testimony to judge by than Hale or Browne had.

In respect to miracles science has this very positive testimony to give: that it cannot so much as consider a miracle. All the evidences that could be gathered from the past would fail to override the conviction of a scientist that he must judge things and decide questions according to the laws of science. He does not deny the absolute power of Deity; but he is forced to conduct his investigations according to natural laws. Moreover, the practical thought of our day rejects miracles as having any place now in the general economy of things. Even those who most stoutly affirm that miracles did happen in the elder times are quite sure that none of them happen now.

But let us look at a miracle to see what it is, — or what is claimed for it. We are told that it is “such an overruling, resisting, or suspending of the known and stable laws of nature as marks the immediate and extraordinary power of God.” What will the theistic evolutionary philosopher have to say to that? He will say that there is one very grave objection to it, viz., that the known and stable laws of nature are the

¹ Lecky, *Hist. Rational.*, Vol. i., cited by Tyndall.

modes of the immediate working of God continually. If we are to think that nature's laws run themselves, that God is not immediately concerned in them, that would be the most astonishing miracle. Here is a steam locomotive pulling a heavy train upon an up grade. It is a very wonderful thing that the engine can pull those heavy cars up the grade ; but if you were to take the steam out, and if then the locomotive should take its train on, that would be evidently the most enormous wonder possible. Whenever nature operates itself, apart from the eternal power of God, there would be a parallel case. If a tree were to grow in any field ; if it were in the spring to put forth blossoms and leaves apart from the immediate power of God, that would be like the steam locomotive pulling a load, and that without steam. Now when the philosophy of the world was such that people thought in that way, having some notion that nature did operate itself, then if at any point there came to be evidence that God was working nature, at that particular time and place, people were so deeply impressed by it that they called it a breaking-in of divine power.

That there could be a breaking-in upon nature of a before absent God, we cannot entertain the idea of after we have found that an absent God means an abolished nature. If an apple were to grow on a tree, and not by the immediate power of God, that apple would be a self-made and a self-sustaining power ; and no event recorded in myth or legend would be so altogether beyond credit to a modern thinker as that apple. It would be indeed the fruit of a forbidden tree, a tree forbidden by all laws.

A miracle according to the old definition has no place in the thinking of an evolutionist. It is safe to

say that. But not so a miracle according to a more rational definition. To a man of low development, a savage, a miracle would be some sudden invasion of a power which he would call preternatural — if he could use such a word. He would be frightened by it. He would try to get away from the presence of such a power, and yet he would blindly worship it. To a man of high development a miracle might be a common thing. A fruit tree bare, and skeleton-like, all at once begins to cover itself with beautiful forms and colors. And a fragrance too rises upon the air. It is wonderful, if the man has the capacity to look at it and see the wonder in it. Why do the blossoms get themselves there? Visible cause there is none. The sun shines and the rains have fallen; but they do not put such gorgeous clothing upon other trees. Well, the observer observes. And while he thinks about it there grows in him a wonder, an adoring wonder, at the whole performance. That is to say, the common thing becomes to him a most surprising thing. And not only so, but he sees that God is there present, doing this wonderful thing. If we had never seen a tree in blossom we should all call it a miracle. Or if, having seen it, we should begin to consider it and look into the mystery of it, then we should speak of it as a miracle. For a miracle is simply a surprise.¹ It is not a breaking-in of God's power, because God does not have to break in. If your friend sits at your hearth and is engaged in delighting you with his presence and his wisdom you are not on the lookout for him to break in at the window like a burglar.

The movement of all history, as we have before seen, is an ascent. From primitive life-germs to high

¹ Sears, *The Fourth Gospel*.

organisms ; from primitive moral feelings and mental activity to educated society. An advance. The whole of God's work and ways did not burst in dazzling revelation upon the vision of man as he was just coming to moral consciousness. You might as well suppose your infant child to have the knowledge of a Bacon or a Goethe as to suppose that. God's power was exerted all the time, as really as now ; but men caught only faint glimpses of it. When they did catch a glimpse of it, that was the miracle of their time. And so they stumbled on, slowly picking up, one generation after another, a little increment of knowledge. Through various periods of religious speculation and thinking the race passed, and not without the words of a few who saw more clearly than others the power of God.

What now has all this course been, but a gradual lifting of the veil from human understanding so as to disclose more and more the presence and power of God ? A theatre, with audience of blind people, might have its curtain rolled up, and the performance going on in due order, but upon each man's eyes there would be a curtain not rolled up. If, however, a process is going on by which this blindness is being removed, then each night the play would become more and more visible to the people present. Some would see earlier than others, — and some more than others, according to the degree of sight possessed by each. So the world has been acquiring these many generations, among other things, sight. God's power all the time performing its part, in ample disclosure ; but men not seeing at all at first, — then very faintly, very imperfectly, as the sight-faculty develops. There come to be miracle-glimpses, which seem like breakings-in

of God ; but in due time the wholesome, reverential and clear insight comes, and then men see what has been true all the time. May we not reasonably expect that a time will come when men will realize the constant energy upon which all finite life depends ?

I suppose that the famous argument of David Hume, the historian, is as strong as any argument formulated since his time. It is this: "Invariable experience is in favor of the uniformity of nature, while it is not in favor of the infallibility of human testimony ; hence there is in all cases a greater probability of the falsity of the testimony as to the occurrence of a miracle, than of the violation of a law of nature thereby implied." I think we must all concede the strength of this argument. We commonly act upon the theory of it, and are in the habit of rejecting those stories which imply a violation of the stable and known laws of nature. But Mr. Hume appears to have proceeded upon the supposition that for practical purposes all the laws of nature are known. The invariable experience of men does not comprehend all that is to be known. For instance, the experience of those who had lived up to the time of Hume did not include the knowledge of the great comprehensive law of evolution.

No age knows what powers are concealed in itself. The primitive man gets a suitable tree, and digs out the centre of the wood, and keeps on digging out until he has made the outside thin. He points the ends of the log, and it is no longer a log, but a boat. He fashions rude paddles, and by such contrivance he paddles against the current of a river, or the force of a tide. He assumes, perhaps, that he has struck upon the only mode of conveyance by water. But in time some one

spreads a light fabric over the canoe, and the wind drives it. The wind was there at first, but the primitive man did not note the possible relation of it to his needs. Moreover, a still greater force was lying concealed there. Alongside of the dugout is the very element in which it moves — the water, — and there is the fire on shore, by which the primitive man cooks his food. The getting of these two into proper relation, according to laws of nature then unsuspected, will propel navies. But experience does not contain any such wonder as that in the time of the primitive man. The power is there, the law is there, not yet exhibited, because the man has not got his eyes sufficiently open. Imagine a man of to-day going down to the primitive man and telling him what is perfectly true, and be sure he will encounter a derisive unbelief. “What! Cook the water, and my boat will go without a paddle? It is absurd! The fire and the water will not come together. The water puts out the fire, and the fire dries away the water. I am not so foolish as to believe such great stories!”

Much depends upon a date. The human experiences of to-day, all told, are not so great as will be the experience of to-morrow. The evolution of experience is an important factor in the argument, and seems not to have been regarded by Hume. The thing that was surprising yesterday, — and scoffed at, perchance, is commonplace and not surprising to-day. Miracles, therefore, disappear as time goes on. To a man who thoroughly realized the immanence of God in nature there would be little of surprise in any divine work. A miracle, as an infraction of the stable laws of nature, or as a breaking into nature of a Divine Being who is usually absent from nature, will undoubtedly

be ruled out of intelligent thought by the philosophy which assumes the most intimate relation between God and the material universe. But a miracle, that is a wonder, or a subject of surprise, no doubt will become more familiar as the laws and forces of nature more and more come into our knowledge and service. And in a very little time the wonder will vanish.

It appears that a very great interest is felt in the matter of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. Probably this interest has been greatly stimulated by such books as those of Renan; and it is witnessed in a marked manner by the eager attention at present given to a novel which reviewers review from many standpoints, and which the clergy appear to love to preach about. I refer to "Robert Elsmere." Such interest will testify to different minds different things. To some, no doubt, it will indicate a wide-spread tendency toward infidelity. The book has probably been read by multitudes, and that I take to be the one important feature of its appearance among us. It has been characterized as a dangerous book. But its popularity suggests a great deal more than its pages contain.

The thermometer is not a dangerous instrument, even though it should indicate a temperature thirty degrees below zero. The trouble is not with the thermometer, but with the state of the atmosphere. And this story book, in its reception by the public, marks the temperature of the public mind. Very cold toward the miracles, very much below any enthusiastic warmth, at least, respecting the belief of them. It appears to me that the book marks strongly that we have come to, and are in, a transition period. And while many have feared that faith would be eliminated, blotted out of the very earth in which we live, it may be that faith

itself will have a transfer from things outward and ostensible, things marvelous, not to say impossible, to another ground. In other words, instead of losing faith, it may be well that we shall find it, by finding a true object for it to rest upon. The principle of the case may be partially illustrated in this way. One goes to you and tells a story, and by telling this story he proposes to get a considerable sum of money from you. You are credulous of the story, and give the applicant the money. The applicant is a stranger to you, and all your faith rests upon the story told you. And such things do not ordinarily turn out well. But another person, whom you have long known, in whom you have learned to believe, asks for your money and says nothing, except that he wants it. In the one case you feel that the issue is doubtful, because there is nothing to rest upon but a story told by an unknown person; in the other case you feel that the issue is not doubtful, because there is a character known, respected, admired, loved, to rest upon. In each case you exercise faith, but in one it is placed upon a tale that is told, — in the other upon a character.

Now I would call your careful attention to the importance of this distinction, — in its application to the New Testament and the tales that are told in it. In the New Testament you are made acquainted with a character; you grow to believe in that character. It is to you human, and it is divine. There are words spoken by this person to which you are bound to give assent. And altogether you are brought to an acquaintance and a thorough faith in this being. By whatever means you are brought to this acquaintance and faith, you have reached the place where you forget the means and remember the fact. But some one

will tell you that this man said things which were not true, that He deceived the people; that He is therefore unworthy of confidence. Such aspersions roll off His character so soon as they are uttered to you. You know that the character is a true one. Now having become acquainted with the life, you listen to tales that are told concerning that life. These tales are told by persons of whom you know, and can know, nothing. In one story which has come down to us, detailed accounts of the childhood of Jesus are given. The trees bow to Him as He walks — He fashions sparrows out of the dirt and bids them fly, and they do fly. And numerous other things of the same sort. These tales are told, but they are rejected by the readers of them. They were rejected by those who established the canon of the Bible as we now have it. Suppose they had not been thus rejected. Suppose we should open our New Testament and should read that the child Jesus once laid hold of a piece of furniture made by the carpenter Joseph, and because it did not prove to be large enough for the place it was to occupy, stretched it out to the desired dimensions. Suppose we should read that the child also killed his playmates by a word or a look if they displeased him. Would we be compelled to sacrifice our faith by disbelieving those stories?

A great amount of critical study has been expended upon the text of the four gospels, as well as upon other portions of the Bible. A certain amount of critical study was expended upon the determination as to what should be admitted to the sacred canon and what should be rejected. It was by reason of such study, books like the one I have alluded to were excluded from the canon. Critical study has expunged

a few passages from our New Testament, in the revised version. The question might be asked if other elements would not have been excluded, had there been a more developed standard of criticism in force when the canon was fixed.

If there is a person who has come to be absolutely convinced of the invariable reign of law and the orderly methods of nature, who has yet learned to love and follow the teachings of Christ, and at the same time finds himself obliged to discredit certain things which are told about Christ, such as that He turned water into wine, is that person to be held an unbeliever? Nay more. If he has come to a very abundant belief, so that he conceives of God as continually changing water into wine, of multiplying loaves and fishes, and the like, is he to be reckoned a disbeliever? And if so, what does he disbelieve? Not God, and not Christ, but certain tales which he is unable to verify. Is a man blamable for being a believer in the order of nature? Certainly we all do believe in that order. One man believes in it more than another. Is he to blame for that? It has been held by some that the harder it is to believe in certain things the more merit there is in believing them; whereas it is plainly apparent that such belief is no belief. If the Christian religion is of universal application, it cannot demand of any one that he shall believe that which to him is an impossibility! On the contrary Christianity demands of every man that he shall believe and be loyal to the thing that he perceives to be true. Tens of thousands of people have no difficulty in believing that the sun stood still in the sky at the command of Joshua. They have no difficulty because their imagination has not been trained

to deal with such a problem. But if it were trained and if they became accustomed to the use of scientific methods, they would cease to believe that such an event occurred. Would they therefore cease to be Christians? It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that a Christian faith is not a faith in what a book contains, but in God manifest in the flesh; in the Divine character, in the Divine human life.

If a man were at the last stages of exhaustion, and some one moved by compassion were to bring a glass of pure wine to drink, and were afterward to break the glass to fragments against the rocks, would the revived man care for that? Christ came in an age of wonders and signs; and if the wonders are now discredited, He is not. I am very sure that whosoever drinks at the fountain of His life is so inspired by it that he cares little if the cup by which the healing draught was lifted to his lips be broken.

And yet, speaking for myself, and perhaps for many, all the miracles recorded in the New Testament are as real to me almost as though I had seen them. I can see the thousands feeding upon the five little loaves and the two small fishes, and the twelve baskets of fragments. I can see Lazarus come forth bound hand and foot from the tomb. I can see the Son of Man walking upon the water. Every such scene is depicted in my imagination as if it were an object of memory. Not only so, but every such tale is dear to me, from association, as well as from a feeling that every miracle is a crystal casket containing some precious truth. But when the cool reasoning process is started, I find myself unable to defend my acceptance of these things, even to myself. Is it not because the imagination has been educated, not in lines

of scientific procedure, but in the lines of religious emotion?

Let there be another person whose imagination has been strictly trained in the observance of the laws of nature and of science, and to him all those miracles have no existence. Is he incapacitated to have faith and be a follower of the Christ? If so, then the Christian faith will not long have a hold upon the nations and communities which foster science. The time may come when the miracles of the New Testament will be seen to belong to the order of nature. The immense authority of the Son of God over the laws and forces of nature may be understood. In any event Christianity simply asks men to believe in the Son of God, to become themselves the sons of God, and to live the life of faith in an ever-present and ever-working God.

If miracles substantiated anything nineteen centuries ago, they substantiate nothing now. We have no call to impose a belief in them upon any one. We must recall the words of Christ: "An evil generation seeketh after a sign." God is the object of faith, and if faith is placed in signs and wonders it becomes degenerate, sinking at last into darkness and night.

XIII.

DIVINE INSHININGS.

“And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.” — JOHN i. 5.

“AN Indian apologue tells us,” says Dr. Cunningham Geikie in his “Life of Christ,” “that a Brahmin, one of whose disciples had been perplexed respecting miracles, ordered a flower-pot filled with earth to be brought to him, and having put a seed into it before the doubter, caused it to spring up, blossom, and bear fruit, while he stood by.

“‘A miracle!’ cried the young man. ‘Son,’ replied the Brahmin, ‘what else do you see done here in an hour than nature does more slowly round the year?’” Dr. Geikie goes on: “A miracle is only an exercise in a new way of the Almighty power we see daily producing perhaps the same results in nature. Infinitely varied forces are at work around us every moment. From the sun to the atom, from the stone to the thinking brain and beating heart, they circulate sleeplessly, through all things forever. As they act and react on each other, the amazing result is produced which we know as nature, but how many mysterious inter-relations, of which we know nothing, may offer endlessly varied means for producing specific ends at the command of God? Nor is there anything more amazing in the works of Christ than in the daily phenomena of nature. The vast universe, embracing heavens

above heavens, stretching out into the infinite, — with constellations anchored on the vast expanse like tiny islet clusters on the boundless ocean, is one great miracle. It was wonderful to create, but to sustain creation is itself to create anew each moment. Suns and planets, living creatures in their endless races, all that the round sky of each planet covers, seas, air, sweeping valleys, lofty mountains, and the million wonders of the brain and heart and life of their innumerable populations, have no security, each moment, that they shall commence another, except in the continued expenditure of fresh creative energy.”

I will venture to present two propositions which are contradictory to each other, and both of which we may probably admit to be true. The first is this: The age of miracles is past. Among highly civilized people, in almost all churches of the Protestant faith, among all schools of thought and philosophy, the sentiment prevails that miracles belong to the past. There are some persons here and there, highly civilized, and perhaps connected with our churches, who believe that miracles continue, but such persons are comparatively few in number. We do not believe that any one can now walk upon the surface of water, unless it is frozen, nor that people who require money wherewith to pay their taxes can find it in the mouth of a fish caught for the purpose. That is one proposition. The other is that the age of miracles has now begun, and lies future to us, also, teeming with unspeakable wonders. We are accustomed to a form of speech which indicates a belief in this proposition. How can the two be held in common? They are held in common. And we can see how that is possible, when we consider how contradictory our common thought is in respect

to miracles. The very ones who deride the miracles of the olden times are fond of referring to the wonders of the present.

Now, if a man were to go through a street in the middle of a dark night he would see at intervals small yellow lights, stationed there for the purpose of aiding such night wanderers as he, and thus serving a most useful purpose. Darkness prevailing all around, but these mere points of light set in place to be at least so much of light. Let him continue his walk. Back and forth he goes, until light begins to come in a general volume. Dawn renders the lights less and less observable, until when the full daylight is come the yellow lights do, in fact, afford no aid whatever to him. Unless his attention were called to them he would not notice them at all, or only accidentally. For lighting purposes they would have no use. The apostle John represents God as light. Let us adopt this representation. This light shineth in the darkness and the darkness apprehendeth it not. When light shines in darkness it shines in detached places here and there. It does not shine all abroad, universally, or else surely it would not be shining in darkness. Look at the moral and mental development of men and communities, and it will be evident that light comes slowly, and in particular places. God's power does, in sober fact, sustain the universe. We can say that now with perfect confidence. Long ago it could not have been said so confidently. God's power did not emerge to visibility except in rare intervals and to rare men. The reason was not that God's power was not exerted, but that men did not know how to recognize it. When anything unusual occurred, out of the range of ordinary experience, that was attributed to some mys-

terious power, which men learned in a slow fashion to call divine. In such unusual occurrences men saw a little gleam of the uncreated light. But not all men saw this light, — only a few, such as were awake.

It is related in the Scriptures that when Jacob, the patriarch, fled from the presence of his brother Esau, he lighted upon a certain place and rested there for the night. And in the night he dreamed. A ladder stood there, as he perceived in his dream, from earth to heaven, and upon this ladder the angels were ascending and descending. When he awoke it was with a new thought kindled in his mind. He said, "God is in this place and I knew it not." This awful conviction came to him in that process of mind which we call the most unreal of all, a dream. As he raised his head from his stone pillow, he may have turned his eyes in every direction to see the ladder, and the angels going up and down it. But nothing of the kind was visible. If you will think of it, the notion of a ladder, with rounds, for angels to travel on, like firemen, is grotesque and absurd. An angel who would require a ladder would manifestly be a feeble and forlorn being. It may be that Jacob came to feel that his dream was, so far as its scenery was concerned, a most unreal thing. But that mattered little. The great fact was that a gleam of light had entered his soul from the before invisible. It appears that he, in common with most of his fellow-men, had never supposed that God was in the place where they were. If they thought of God, it would be as a majesty reigning in some other place. But now Jacob was convinced that God was not absent from the place in which he had slept. That was the thought which was destined to grow in him, and in the nation of which

he was founder. From it would result the conviction in others that God was in the places where they were. And so Jacob made a monument there, in rough sort, testifying that the place was a dreadful one — a place of awful solemnities — because he had found that the Invisible One, of whom he had heard from his father Isaac, was there. And it may be said that out of this conviction grew the Israelitish nation. They had their tabernacle, and offered their morning and evening sacrifices. They afterward built their temple upon a hill of that region, calling it the house of God, so witnessing to all nations that they had found the presence of the invisible Power. Nothing is more unreal than a dream. That a dream, and a grotesque, absurd dream of a ladder scaled by angels, should become the foundation of a national polity and religion, must be a very disturbing fact to those who maintain that if water was not turned into wine at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, then the Christian religion is all an imposition from beginning to end. It may nevertheless be true that the dream of Jacob, of which so careful an account is given in the sacred Scriptures, was of more importance to Israel's future than almost any other one thing. For the impression was made, and it became deepened with the passing of time, that God was there, the actual sovereign of Jacob and of those who should proceed from him. It was an inshining of God, the light, in the general darkness of the world, not apprehended by the darkness, but preparatory to a more general inshining in the future.

Let us go on from Jacob to later times, and we behold an increase of the conviction which had become rooted in Jacob's being. In Moses it has enlarged. He finds God's presence in the wilderness of Sinai.

He sees a bush that is burning, but not consumed. This may have been as unreal in physics as the ladder-dream of Jacob. The unreal often covers the real as the husk covers the corn. The real of the case was the conviction in the mind of Moses that the ground whereon he stood was holy ground, because God was there present. And the voice, if not a vibration of the waves of air, which is usually the outward phenomenon of a voice, was a most real voice telling him the great truth that God was in that place, as well as in Hebron. The voice goes on to tell the shepherd the great truth, which he had been slow to apprehend, that God was the witness of the bondage and sufferings of the people in Egypt. And that the time had come for their deliverance. Now will any one be bold enough to say that if there were no vibrations of the air at that place and time there was nothing whatever?

Without attempting to follow the steps of the development of Jacob's conviction, or of the greater conviction of Moses, let us pass over centuries, and halt with Jesus and His disciples as they bend in reverent consideration over the flower which bloomed by the roadside. At last the conviction of Jacob has attained its completion. And the profound feeling of Moses, that the ground whereon he stood was indeed holy ground, is enlarged to infinity. Had the disciples ever looked at a flower before? Yes. Thousands of times they had seen the humble thing by the path as they walked. But they had never thought the ground holy where the flower grew. Now, however, the flower was changed into a burning flower, just as to Moses the bush was turned into a burning bush; it burned with the light that does not consume. They too, turned aside to see that wonderful thing, and if then they did not hear all

that the voice said, the time did come when they must have realized in some little degree that the ground in which not only that particular flower grew, but the ground in which all flowers are growing, is holy ground, because God is there. Awe-struck by his vision, Jacob had felt that the place where he had been sleeping was a dreadful place; and the Israelite afterward felt that the temple, God's house, into whose outward courts he might come, was in its innermost sanctuary a dreadful place, a place not to be looked upon, except by the highest of the nation, and then but once in a year.

But Christ had shown His disciples that while all places are holy places, they are not dreadful places. They are indeed sacred, so soon as one learns the presence in all places of One not to be dreaded, but to be trusted and obeyed.

If we are told that there was no ladder between the earth and sky, that there were no angels going up and down the rounds of it, and that therefore the very foundation of the Israelitish polity and religion is gone, we can surely afford to smile at such a statement.

It is with the conviction of Jacob we have to do; and that it should have come by way of a dream is of no account. It got here, lodged itself in the man's mind, began to outgrow his mind and other minds, went on growing. If we are told that never did a bush burn but that it consumed (unless the fire were extinguished), and that therefore the whole of the work of Moses, his legislation and leadership, are nothing but so much imposition upon the credulity of silly people, we can also afford to smile at that. For the great fact remains, however it may be accounted

for, that such things have been introduced into the world by dream of Jacob, by vision of Moses, have been of great use and purpose in the world, have brought to pass farther developments of the knowledge of God.

At the present time we are more or less familiar with statements such as this: viz., If Christianity was not introduced into the world by miracles, if the tales which are related by the evangelists of the three synoptic gospels — to say nothing of the fourth gospel — are not literally true, then Christianity falls to the ground as a baseless system, and not only valueless, but as a great fraud practised upon the credulity of nineteen centuries. Such a statement is made by fair-minded and earnest men, who fear the issue of the criticism of our day. Let us glance at the implications of this kind of feeling. It is related by one of the evangelists that as Christ approached the village of Nain, He met a funeral procession, and that He restored the dead man to life. This tale is related by that one of the evangelists who prefaced his gospel by the statement that he had undertaken to gather up and critically examine the information possible to be obtained from all sources. It is a usual thing in this world of ours that among the possible sources of information may be those which are not reliable. However that may be, if we are told that if this incident did not occur then the whole of Christianity is a fable, it might be asked whether it would still be true that the meek and the merciful and the pure of heart are blessed. Or if we ought to cease to believe that such as hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled, in case it should be proved that the infant Jesus was never taken down into Egypt. When it was declared

to the people of Europe that the sun does not revolve around the earth, some one might rise and say that if the sun does not revolve around the earth there is no sun. But the sun does shine in the heavens in spite of the now admitted fact that it does not revolve around the earth: and all men are bathed in the light of it and warmed by the heat of it.

That Christianity was introduced by miracles, *i. e.*, wonderful and abundant inshinings of the light of God's power, I do not doubt. I think it is even capable of demonstration. That the way was prepared for the introduction of Christianity by many glimpses of the light of God's presence, occurring at not infrequent intervals for many centuries, seems to me the most natural and reasonable thing to believe. Indeed, if the case were to be adequately presented, I am of opinion that all candid persons who are in any sense theists, and perchance some who are not, would accept such a statement. For the Uncreated Light is ever shining, has ever been shining. Every man born into the world, at any time, as I take it, has stood in the full blaze of the Uncreated Light. But has every man comprehended it? Ah, there lies the difficulty. Say that a child is newly born to-day, and takes his place among us as a member of our human family. Here is the newly born child, and here are all the things which the light of the sun discloses. Such multitude of things of all kinds, and all of them present, and the light of the sun upon them all,—but how much does the child actually see of all? Nothing. Full disclosure, if you please, of all the ways and works of men and of God, but a very great lack on the part of this new observer. The darkness, we are entitled to declare, is all in the observer. Begins then the

education of the child. What are the earlier seeings of the little observer but most imperfect and distorted seeings? Glimpses and consequent wonderment; glimpses increasing. But suppose your little child undertakes to tell what he sees, and what he thinks of what he sees, and to explain causes, there will certainly be much mixture of the real and the apparent in the narration. The child may be entirely simple and candid, and desirous of telling the truth as it actually is, but he will fail in that because he is not sufficiently instructed. The wonderful things coming under the observation of the learner will be told out by him according to his feeble grasp of the subject.

Now this little child repeats the history of the human race in epitome. We have found that the young of species repeat the physical history of the species; it is also true that the mental and moral history of our human race is repeated, in effect, by the young of the race. Go back into the far past, and among all nations you will find something of the feelings of men respecting God. In every literature flash the miracles. For in every literature there are inshinings of the power of God. Men did not know what these inshinings were; they did not refer them to the One and only Supreme God. But they felt that they were surrounded by a power, or powers, of which they tried to speak as well as they knew how. They had strange experiences and tried to tell them. These experiences, told and retold, grew into the traditions of tribes and families. They grew into the religious feeling, and made up the body of the religion of peoples. We read the tales of Homer, the mythologies of the North and the East, and of the Romans, and of the aborigines of our continent. Are not all these tales

and mythologies lies? There is no Odin, no Jupiter, no sun-god, no Brahm. We find the ancients of different localities talking about these fancied beings, offering them worship and sacrifices. And we cry out in a kind of indignation against all these fables. We look down from our lofty height upon them all and say: "Two things or more we your descendants and superiors have to say to you, that your instructors were liars, and those of you who consented to be thus instructed were fools!" Ah, how small a right have we to take such a lofty tone. The Light was shining, Light of God's power and wisdom, all along those ages, and among all those people, but it was shining in the darkness and the darkness apprehended it not. The undeveloped mind of the observers of nature could receive at most but the faint glimpses of the Light.

Respecting the religions of the past, two kinds of feelings exist, as I make out, and neither of them wise or reverent toward God. One is the feeling of disdain, bitter, or calm and philosophical, toward all ancient religions; legends of the North, myths of the Greek, worship of Egypt, Hebrew theism, Christianity, — all fabulous, and all to be distrusted by rational people, — to be dropped by them into the limbo of forgetfulness. Why waste our time on such childish superstition? Why give so much as a thought to the futile dreams of dead visionaries, impostors, and myth makers? At once we recognize this as the utterance of infidelity, and protest that it is not a good utterance. The other feeling induces those who have it to separate between the Hebrew and Christian religions, and all the other religions of the past. Such a separation is true, if reasonably guarded. It is not reason-

ably guarded when we declare that in these two, the one rooted in the other, we have the truth, without admixture of error; and have in all the outside religions, Northern, Greek, Egyptian, Eastern, nothing but error, unmixed with truth: and not only error, but most mischievous and intentional misrepresentation; lies, and nothing but lies. That declaration is surely contrary to the spirit of Christianity, which presents God as the Father of men, and the Lover of men of all nations. It denies the shining of the Light as universal. It justifies the hatred of one man to another, of one nation to another.

But once let it be seen, as John saw, that the true Light lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and we go free both from the general disdain of infidelity, and the contempt which many have toward every religion but their own. While upon all men the Light shined, some must have been better prepared for it than others; some must have better interpreted things and their relations than others. Those founders of nations, men like Abraham, who best apprehended the Light, would have most of divine revelation. They and their descendants would be best fitted to bless the world and to spread the light. But to assume that Abraham and his descendants had all the truth and no error, and that all others had all error and no truth, would be the same as to assume that the sun does not shine in the heavens for all men, but only in Palestine for a few men.

Now, if at any time there has been a complete and perfect understanding of events, and of God's relation to them, and if this complete understanding is recorded, then we have a perfect standard of all truth. Then there is something in which there is not the

shade of a possible error. We shall have the inshinings of God's power and presence given in precisely right statement, and the whole of the truth of the case will be told. But the Apostle Paul, who had seen the Great Light coming upon him with a force and volume so tremendous, confesses that at the summit of his experience, and of the experience of all others, our best knowledge is not a complete knowledge, but a partial knowledge. "We know in part." He had a vision of being caught up to the third heavens, where he was shown unspeakable things. We interpret it that he had a great experience of heaven, unreportable to others, but that he was here among men, and on earth, when he had this wonderful experience. He, however, confesses that he does not know whether he was in the body or out of the body at the time. He does not know whether his body went to the third heaven or not. So great was the wonder, the ecstasy of the vision, so completely was his mind occupied with it, that he was unable to say anything about his body, or whether that went aloft to the skies. To Paul the ascent of a body to the farthest sky was not an impossibility; to us it is, for our time at least, an impossibility. He does not know whether his body had been among the stars or not. Another man, with soul so highly wrought upon, but without Paul's caution, might easily have been persuaded that he had been in heaven, in body, and in clothes and all. And might most honestly have testified to that effect. The miracle was, I submit, a most real one, a veritable inshining of the Light, but what the relater of it did not know, we are quite sure we know, viz., that his ascent to heaven was a spiritual experience, wonderfully vivid, and not an

ascension of his person through the air, and through the ether beyond the air, to some locality called the third heaven.

Of miracles, in the sense of breakages or suspensions of natural laws, our education in the light of the century in which we live, and our confidence in the reign of law, render us necessarily distrustful. But miracles, in the sense of surprising inshinings of the divine power, we are not called upon by reason or rational philosophy to reject. On the contrary, we must have learned, from the evolution of childhood to adulthood, both in individuals and nations, that the Light that lighteth every man is received by men only as they have their eyes opened and are able to see. We are sure that the darkness comprehends not the light. That the first apprehensions of it are slight and mingled with much error. That the later apprehensions of it are not perfect apprehensions, but partial. Therefore, we do find occasion to call in question the manner in which the miracles or inshinings of God are presented to us in the Scriptures, as well as in other books. Must we not agree with Paul and say of those who wrote the accounts of the inshinings of God in the days of Christ, that they knew in part and testified in part? If they could have told us all, we should suffer no difficulty.

The purpose of all the inshinings of God's power in the past is manifestly to open our eyes, not to signs and wonders, but to the truth which the signs signify. And that is the actual Divine presence and love and grace. How we come to realize that, whether by dreams and visions or by wonders of any kind, is of little import. And when we do realize it, we have no farther use for miracles. As at noon day, when

the sun is shining overhead, we have no use for street lamps.

Christianity, we are sometimes told, means largely belief in miracles. That a man may have faith in God, he may have religion, but if he has not faith in specific miracles his religion is not Christianity. Need any reader of the New Testament be told that Christ was a reluctant worker of signs and wonders? That He did not value the faith that was founded upon them? How reproachfully He says to one: "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe." It could be said now to those who assert that they would give up their religion if they did not believe in miracles. If that is so, I do most seriously question whether they would give up the Christian religion: it would be a religion of thaumaturgy. If one believes in signs and wonders, and the like, it is a question for him to ask himself, with emphasis, whether he does in fact believe in the Eternal God, who works all things wonderful and not wonderful. If he does believe in God, the miracles are of no farther use to him. If he does not believe in God, they are still of no use to him.

The divine revelation to our race is in general its education, and this education is slow. It proceeds like the education of a child. The child takes first the sound of letters, and is taught to connect the sound with the sign; then he puts two or three letters together into short words, or syllables; then he puts syllables together into larger words; then words into sentences and from that on he goes to such acquirement as he may. But the earliest acquirement is the least and conveys the least knowledge. The knowledge of the sign and its sound is preparatory to further knowledge. And the main object is the acqui-

sition of all possible knowledge. As time goes on the childish things are put away. A man has lost the distinct perception of a letter in a word, and of a word in a sentence.

The religious revelation to our race is an advancing, increasing revelation. The later revelation must needs be in advance of all that precedes. I need hardly be at pains to prove that the latest revelation is that of the universal prevalence of law. Law for all created things, law for all relations and beings. Law for all the heavens as well as for our particular localities. This peculiarly characterizes the education of the past two centuries. That this education is of God need be in no degree doubtful to the one who has the conception of any kind of divine revelation. The idea of universal law has made an impression upon our age second to no other. So profound is this impression that the astronomer, for instance, would readily stake all that he possesses, nay, his life itself, upon the constancy of the laws with which he is familiar. Upon an abrupt termination of any law of the heavens he would stake nothing. He cannot soberly consider such a contingency. Is he right? Is it not faith in God, as governing the universe in order, that makes him willing to stake his life upon that order? And if any religion of man demands of him that he forego his confidence, will he not be justified in saying no to it? The question of God's power does not arise in such a case; God could drown the earth in the conflagration of the sun to-morrow; we have the utmost confidence that such an event will not occur, because we have observed the law which governs the movements of the earth. In regard to all the abrupt interferences of God with the order of nature which are recorded in

all books of the ancient time, any man will take them to be true, when he is assured of the actuality of the occurrence by adequate proof. But until that proof arrives he could not believe them in such a way as to stake his life upon them. On the other hand, that righteousness is blessed, that hungering and thirsting for it is blessed, and, in brief, the teachings and life of Christ, he can stake his life upon, because they meet the response of his own intuition. The Brahmin of Dr. Geikie's story employed a kind of magic to open the eyes of his disciple to the universal power and wisdom of God. Christ employed a power, not magical, but to appearance extraordinary, to open the eyes of His disciples, or to let more of the light shining around them in upon them, in which light He dwelt. How He did this, we have no record. The mode therefore is unimportant, while the light is of vast importance. In other words, the sign, or wonder, is not of consequence; but the thing signified is of vast consequence.

The story of the prodigal son, is it a true story? In the deepest sense true, in the shallowest sense not true. It is related that Christ opened the eyes of the blind. Whether true or not in the shallowest sense, certainly that was what He was constantly doing. He was letting in the light, and how fitting therefore were his words: "While ye have the light believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light."

XIV.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

“Blessed are the meek (gentle), for they shall inherit the earth.”
— MATTHEW v. 5.

As time goes on the appetite to know what existence is and what it means increases. Men of developed minds wish to understand, and under favorable conditions succeed in understanding, more of existence than was possible in earlier periods. It is not well for us to ask what the use of understanding existence is, because in asking such a question we dishonor our heads and discredit the usefulness of all intelligence. Our minds endow us with the faculties of knowing, and our knowledge must needs be for some useful purpose.

It is quite possible that bread cost as much per loaf after Newton and Galileo as before, and that the discoveries of Archimedes did not at once cheapen the price of a woolen garment. The sun is an immovable body, with reference to the earth and other planets; yes, but then we must have a dinner, and must proceed as before to earn money to pay for it. The heaven is not a tent or canopy, as appears, but an open space; yes, but we must plough or reap in that case, as our mistaken predecessors did. What difference does it make? Just this difference: that the increase of knowledge with relation to the sun in the heavens will

in due time affect all departments of human thought and energy, — will in time affect both price and quality of your loaf of bread, since it will bring in its train other knowledge. I suppose it would be idle to consume the time of an intelligent reader in seeking to establish the practical utility of knowledge; and yet I have been asked such questions as these: "Of what practical use are discussions upon evolution? Will they help men and women to be better, to be more Christian in character and conduct?" I unhesitatingly say yes to that, upon the ground that knowledge is power, and may be and ought to be a good power. Moreover, the church has a most important function to fill in the enlightenment of the community for moral and religious ends.

I confess that I am of the number of those who are solicitous to have the church on the right side of great questions, so far as possible. It is precisely the kind of institution which ought to welcome every ray of light as it comes. And the church requires to be roused to its duty in that matter. Canon Farrar said while he was in America: "If Christianity is to hold her own, Christians must beware of stagnant doctrines and dead theologies. Theology must learn to change her line voluntarily and by her own insight, and not be forced to do so only when the strangling grasp of criticism is at her throat."

If evolution is true, or, to put it in another way, if progress, advancement, is right; if it is in the divine purpose that advance shall be made, then it follows that the church, in order to be in accord with the divine purpose, must not be a laggard, following in the rear of all progress, or worse still, hindering all progress, and making advancement more difficult: it

must be in the advance, and keep in the advance. Now the church, which at the beginning took its place in the fore-front of this divine progress, has not always maintained that place. It has very often been in the rear, and sometimes in actual retreat. In a time of transition, like the present, it is of the highest importance that the church come once more to the front, or it will go far to forfeit the respect and confidence of mankind. Very severe and pungent were the words of Professor Morse, uttered at a late meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and it is most devoutly to be hoped that the church in her future history will effectually refute them so far as the future is concerned. He says, "Judging by centuries of experience as attested by unimpeachable historical records, it is safe enough for an intelligent man, even if he knows nothing about the facts, to promptly accept as truth any generalization of science which the church declares to be false; and conversely to repudiate with equal promptness as false any interpretation of the behavior of the universe which the church adjudges to be true." ¹

Permit me to remind you that evolution is the universal law of becoming. Every thinker has this light shed upon his own pathway, and upon the course of history, and upon the future, if he chooses to avail himself of it. Every one whose deepest consciousness leads him to believe in God may enjoy this additional knowledge, now afforded by the new philosophy — *i. e.*, that God does all things in an ascertainable method, and that method we have now learned to call evolution. It is true enough that we are not able, being finite, to trace any but a small portion of the

¹ Hitchcock's *Influence of Science*, etc.

procedures of God. But by generalization we reach beyond our narrow bounds into the boundless and have a reasonable confidence regarding the unseen realities.

One form of life succeeds another, but not fortuitously and not whimsically. From the lower gradually rises the higher. In biology we ascend from the mollusk to the fish; from the fish to the reptile, and so on upward to the primate, man. I suppose that all persons of intelligence, however prejudiced, will admit the great probability of evolution, as applied so far, provided they have taken the pains to inform themselves on the subject. But evolution, as we have seen, does not cease at physical man. If it did, religion would have no special interest in it one way or the other; and there would be no such thing as the evolutionary philosophy. The same process enters the domain of intelligence and of moral activity, and goes on and on as far as thought can follow, and farther. It is easy to trace the process of evolution in the individual man; in fact every one does trace it who is capable of tracing anything. The fond mother watches her babe with a profound interest. She may not put the case to herself in words, but she is an investigator of the most august process of which we have any knowledge. From the time a man is born into the world, until he attains full strength of maturity, he is a process. I speak of him thus, not to reduce the terms or quantities and qualities of his being, but to dignify the word process, as thus applied. He develops, and is an astonishment to his mother, and perhaps to a few other interested onlookers.

He is a growth, as really as a grass-blade or a tree; and that, too, as we all thoroughly know, in all de-

partments of his complex nature. We can fairly see the evolution of his external organism from the pulpy, soft body of early infancy, almost as helpless as inorganic matter itself, through stages of change, with accretion of bone-strength, muscle-power, and bulk. The case is so plain, and so clearly an evolution from first to last, that the wayfaring man, though unscientific, cannot err therein. But there is also an interior organism. Is the development of that any less plain than the other?

Suppose we assume that the perfect coöperation of all the parts and powers of the child's body constitute an equilibrium. "By the ever-changing number and relative power of the coöperating parts the equilibrium is ever being disturbed, only to be readjusted on a higher plane, with still more beautiful and complex inter-relations." (LeConte.) The interior or mental life of the child is also in movement, going on from lower to higher stages. The parents see this progress, which first shows itself in indefinite ways, and gradually grows more and more definite. There is a dawning of intelligence, indicated by the acquirement of language, which grows from obscure sounds to distinct articulation. Faculties or abilities emerge to view, as the teeth show themselves in the gums. And so the process goes on.

So far there need be, and there is, no collision of opinion. The individual man is an evolution, and all observers know it, however reluctant they may be to express it in terms of the coming philosophy. But this process is not an exception; it is not a case by itself. The evolutionary philosophy distinctly involves the principle that the law of evolution is the method of the growth of society, that is, of the aggregate of individuals, as well as of the single person.

To many persons the idea of the evolution of society presents difficulties almost insurmountable. Society is so complex, so under influences of a million diverse and contradictory sorts, and there are so many things which appear merely incidental, and there are so many separate and conflicting wills involved, that it is difficult to see how there is a law of social development. Well, of course, there are difficulties all along the path of the investigator. •

A number of years ago Mr. Joseph Cook made a very brilliant paragraph respecting a certain phenomenon in the Indian Ocean. There is a thing in those waters known as the Neptune's Cup. It has a base, a stem, and a cup, and in shape is like the goblet in common use. It is about six feet high and three in breadth. It is built by polypi, each one being so small as to be almost imperceptible. These creatures build without consultation, first the base, then the stem, the top of which they widen out to the proper symmetry for a cup, and then they go on up with this hollow cup. These workers cannot talk; they work independently.

There is a law of the individual life, of course, but there is very plainly also a law of the associated life. It is neither less nor more mysterious than other phenomena, however, although it strongly impresses the observer. Why it is the polypi build a goblet, instead of a basket or a box, it is impossible to say. It is by observing what the creatures actually do build that we gain a little knowledge concerning them. Human beings, so far as we know them in the historic periods, are social; that is to say, they universally devote themselves to society building. You cannot study the human being, certainly above the level of his phys-

ical development, without at the same time studying the society he makes. And he never lawlessly makes society, — any more than the polyp of the Indian ocean makes the Neptune's Cup by mere freak. On the whole the evolution of society is perhaps the plainest department of evolution. One needs no tools, no high-power lenses, no chemic analyses, to possess himself of the main features of this development. He requires no special training.

We cannot fail to see, if we see at all, the succession of progressive social changes. We have on the earth to-day specimens of society in all or many of its forms. The Papuan society is primitive, savage; the Central African societies also savage; and there are the less savage, near the borders of that continent, and elsewhere; the semi-barbarous, and the barbarous; the semi-civilized and the civilized. And in civilization we behold the constant struggle for higher and higher points of development. All this is spread chart-like before us for our intelligent inspection. And not only so, but history shows that these different forms of society have grown out of each other.

If we start with the family, or what may correspond with the family, as the unit, we perceive that families were in a struggle with each other for subsistence. They adopted means of defense. They grew into tribes, grouped their separate habitations for defensive purposes. All this of course grew out of the struggle for existence. Then came the walled villages and small cities. In time tribes united their forces against conquerors and pillagers, and so gradually societies came together to form a larger society. The patriarch or chief became a king, and ruled a composite society. The kingdoms, however, were them-

selves tending all the time to unity. The strongest would conquer or absorb the weaker until what is known as universal monarchy arose. The Babylonian, Medo-Persian, the Greek, the Roman, succeeded each other as universal monarchies. The tendency was predominantly toward bulk, or size. Then came the movement which appears to run in the opposite direction; the rupture of the Roman power, the rise of feudalism, the development of the modern kingdoms and nationalities. But this movement was not in a direction opposite to gradual development; for there is observable an improvement in the quality of society. Absolutism began to give place to representative forms of government, and other limitations. The will of the governed began to be consulted, as in the Parliament, the Reichstag, the Chamber of Deputies, and the like. The quantitative development gives place to the qualitative. The extension of the social cohesion from the family to the universal monarchy is succeeded by the gradual modification of the function of government. Notions of liberty and other elements of modern civilization are fostered and increased.

Schools are multiplied for the education of the people, so that they may sustain the responsibility of a new citizenship. And thus the history of the social development of the race is seen to be an upward march. Certainly one who studies this march of improvement will not look into the past to find a golden age. He will not find that, or semblance of it, in that direction.

Social development is marked, as is all other progress, with branch movements, and even with retrograde movements. Society often appears, and per-

haps now as much as ever, to stand in danger from evil and hostile forces within itself. The danger is real, and not to be passed lightly over, but it is of a temporary nature; and he may enjoy a serene confidence in the continued march of social improvement, who has discovered in evolution the mode of the creation of a Wise and Beneficent Creator. The one thing which apparently interposes most obstacles to human progress and happiness is the grasping and greedy selfishness of many. The thoroughly selfish man haughtily proposes the furtherance of his own schemes for personal advantage, and is careless of the woes he may inflict upon many by his selfish course. Combinations of selfish and powerful men arise, as in the past, so now, and become corporate forces, with which it seems almost idle to contend. They threaten to dominate the world. And on the other hand desperate men arise from the ranks of the discontented and threaten the peace and order of society from below. Thus over organized society resounds the thunder of a dominating power, and from beneath comes the shaking of the earthquake of revolt. But with thunder overhead and earthquake beneath we may be sure that the best shall prevail. So far as social development is concerned it will not be hindered. The law of the survival of the fittest, a law which has suffered greatly from careless and ignorant misrepresentation, is the law of the universe and the law of the Lord.

Glance at the book of the kings of nature, as recorded in geologic pages. In the Siluro-Cambrian ages were no true fishes, and nothing higher than fishes. In vast numbers, in great variety of form, and often in great size, the mollusks were the rulers

of the seas. There was no competition, and the mollusk, of low organization, had the monopoly of power. He then was the lord of creation. In the latter part of this Paleozoic period fishes made their appearance, and, being of higher organization, they rapidly usurped the dominion of the mollusk, and the mollusk began to dwindle in size and importance. The fish was the lord of creation. In Mesozoic times, reptiles, finding favorable conditions, increased in size and variety until land and water swarmed with them. "Never before or since have reptiles existed in such numbers, in such variety of form, or assumed such huge proportions, nor have they since been so highly organized as then. They quickly became rulers in every realm of nature: rulers of the sea, swimming reptiles; rulers of the land, walking reptiles; and rulers of the air, flying reptiles." (LeConte.) The day of the rule of the fish was over, and the reptile reigned in its place. Mammals were introduced, of a low type, and not able to assume the supremacy. But they were of higher organization than the reptiles, and belonged to the grand march of improvement, and in the Tertiary period, having increased in number, size, and variety, they overpowered the reptile-ruled world, and assumed the higher place. Finally, in the Quaternary, man comes upon the scene, contending dubiously for a while with the great mammals, but soon acquiring mastery through superior intelligence. The huge and dangerous mammals are destroyed, or are being destroyed, useful plants and animals are preserved and made serviceable.

In all these kingdoms the lower is supplanted by the higher, and the higher in due time comes to sovereignty, because most fit, by organization, for rule.

No matter in what weakness it begins, the quality of its organization determines its fitness. Then the sup-
planted sinks, not into extinction, but into a secondary
or lower place in the general economy. And as these
changes progress the whole organic kingdom arises,
not only in its higher forms, but in complexity. When
man is reached he finds himself the final ruler of the
series, the final lord of creation, because his structure
best fits him for that purpose.

But compare man with the mammals lower down,
and he must seem to have a very poor outlook indeed
in competitions of force. In physical strength he does
not rank with the tiger of the jungle not only, but he
does not even rank with the reptile, nor the fish, nor
the mollusk. His organization is higher, and the pro-
cesses which go on in him are of a higher and more
delicate sort. Muscular strength has ceased to hold
supremacy, — that is, so far as all that is below man
is concerned. Now, man having appeared upon the
earth to be its lord, must needs go through a pro-
cess of creation as a society. Who among men shall
rule? At first, as we may well conceive, it shall be
the strongest. He who excels other men in ferocity
and strength of muscle will be king, or the equivalent
thereof.

There was a time on this earth when the best was
simply physical power. But something greater and
better than that grew up; intelligence. Put intelli-
gence and physical power together and you have that
which is more potent than either could be separately.
And along with intelligence come the faint rudiments
of a moral sense.

Very weak, very easily overcome at first, but cer-
tainly bound to dominate the earth in due time.

Link together physical power and untempered intelligence, and you have the cunning and crafty subtlety which smothers all opposition. For a time that is the best possible. But the development of the moral faculties assumes proportion, and that is the time when our human history, as human, may properly be said to begin. That is the final best. That, following every precedent of the preceding ages, must prevail. So that, while the most ferocious and muscular man ruled in his little clan, under that Divine Providence which had in every geologic period conserved the best until it grew from the weakest to the most powerful, the human soul began its development. As I take it, it is of that development chiefly the Bible gives us the history. In the older portion of the Bible we behold the soul of man in weakness, making its struggle for existence, so to speak. Struggling with a Philistine environment, and with the inherited forces of a lower nature, it seems like a losing warfare. The few of Israel stand out in loneliness for mercy and judgment; the many are under the rule of the lower nature.

At last One ascends a mountain and announces that the soul of man is to be the ruling power of the world. That mercy and peace and purity and righteousness are to become the policy of the government of the earth.

At the very moment when these wonderful words are spoken, they are contradicted by all experience, all history, as history must then have been read, and by almost all philosophy. At that very moment perhaps the Roman populace may have been gathered in holiday trim to witness the cruel sports of the arena. Roman dames and dandies may have been looking down from their seats upon bloody gladiatorial shows, or clapping

their hands as lions were set loose upon human prey. Certainly, many years after Christ had declared that the gentle should inherit the earth, when the Flavian Amphitheatre (whose ruins still stand) had been built, the gentle were cast to the hungry beasts under the applause of the dominant power of the world.

And since that day what horrors of cruelty have been enacted, even under the name of Him who taught that mercy was good, and cruelty evil, and that the gentle should rule the world ! The reverberations of our own great artillery rolling over an hundred battle-fields have hardly yet died away in silence, and numberless battalions of armed men across the sea stand at attention ready for the command to shoulder arms and march anywhither, and yet we are confronted with the promise that the best shall prevail, and that not the brutal man, not the crafty man, but the gentle man shall rule. It is strange to us, if not incredible. But if well looked to, it is the mute teaching of the rocks under our feet, which enclose the central heats of the globe. They tell the story of ages of struggle ; they tell of the survival and ultimate reign of the fittest. And they more than hint that the fittest of to-day is not the fittest of millions of years ago ; and from other sources of information we learn that the fittest for sovereignty is the soul in which the kingdom of the Christ, the law of gentleness, mercy, peace, and purity is enthroned.

Even to this day the law of the survival of the fittest is misunderstood, and is not infrequently animadverted upon by divines who are able to see in it only the old highwayman's motto, " Might makes right." There was a time when might did make right ; it was when the reptile triumphed over the fish, when the

mammal triumphed over the reptile, when primitive man conquered his place in the economy of nature; but that all belongs to the dim past. Now, to sum it all up in a word, that society is most fit which is most Christlike.

The Christlike is on the ascendant. It still struggles with a hostile environment, but it gains. Society cannot be entertained with scenes of blood and cruelty any more. Society has its mercy, too, and raises its hospitals for the care of the sick, its asylums for the insane, the blind, the incapable, the poverty-stricken. Mark it well: eighteen centuries ago cruelty was the fashion; to-day charity is the fashion. This signifies a development along lines which are determined by no individual human will, but along the lines of the divine creative purpose.

The evolutionary philosophy coheres with the teachings of the Christ. He not only announced His doctrines of the conduct of life, but at the same time announced their ultimate kingship. In days when the gentle man was at a discount, pushed to the wall in the general struggle, He declared that it was the gentle man who should inherit the earth. And here is this scientific doctrine of the survival of the fittest, substantiated by boundless proofs, expanding in meaning as the proofs accumulate, landing us finally upon the very mount of outlook where He stood, and endorsing His word. For it is the relatively gentle who has, since human history began, inherited the earth, in each epoch. That is, the relatively superior, in respect of mildness and reasonableness, has been gradually supplanting the inferior and fiercer, in all the progressive portions of society. Thus the "race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," but to

the fittest; and the fittest is not such "by might nor by power," but by spiritual and moral quality.

And so, I think, the evolutionist can contemplate the conditions and movements of society with a degree of calmness; and the Christian evolutionist, certainly, ought to be able to contemplate them with an increasing hopefulness. After having looked backward, under the interpreting guidance of evolution, we must look forward to better social conditions. And as to social problems, such as now arise, they never can be settled upon other than right grounds, and in accordance with the universal law of survival.

A society whose constitution involves necessarily injustice to any class of people, cannot long survive, except by change or repentance. A society in which reasonableness and mildness cannot flourish, and come to sovereign influence, is undermined. Therefore, it becomes every one who desires the welfare of society to make it so far as he can a gentle society, to be himself gentle. Above all, to have no confidence in any cruel methods, or unjust procedures; to trust not in mere cleverness, and craftiness; but to trust in the victorious principles of righteousness, and follow them. And that essentially is belief in Him who said, "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth."

XV.

SOCIAL CONSOLIDATION.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” —
GALATIANS vi. 2.

It is comparatively easy to see why a chair is made, and how. It is desirable to have something to sit upon. A slab or a plank can have holes bored in its under side, and three or four sticks of equal length can be driven in these holes, and the seat is made. Then for comfort it is desirable to have a back for your seat; that is easily arranged. And then arms, perchance even rockers. Then for additional comfort, or luxury, let us have cushions in our chair. That is the evolution of the chair, from the rough stool to the elaborate and ornate article of furniture with carved wood and satin cushions. And there is no mystery about it which cannot be explored. Such and such pieces of wood for legs, such metal things with wheels in them for castors, such material for the upholstery, etc. But the chair remains always what it was, except that it gradually wears out.

If we look at something through which force is to operate the thing is more complex. An engine with its furnace, its boiler, and the like, for example. The force is generated within the thing, and the requisite modes for the conveyance and application of the force must be provided. Pipes, valves, pistons, and other such devices must be placed in right relation with each

other, so as to make the whole correspond with an organism. That our skill is competent to do.

But there is a very common piece of mechanism, which we may call animal mechanism, which is made up of valves and pipes, and a kind of piston, and other gearing, and we are forced to inquire how these different pipes and valves and things are made. It has been discovered that all of these parts which go to the sum total of an animal mechanism are made by the association of cells together. These life-cells build every pipe and every valve and every tissue of the mechanism. Some of them make the heart, some of them the lungs, and in fact every part is made by the association of these little cells.

If a skillful artist should undertake to make a bee, he would not make it in the way the actual bee is made. He would make his tiny bee machinery, part by part, and put it together, and enclose it in a case like the exterior form of the bee. But the actual bee is made by a sort of differentiation of these little cells of which its anatomy is composed. Some of the cells form the brain, or what we may call the brain of the little creature, and some of them form the breathing apparatus, and some the wings, and some the eyes, and some the sting and its encasement. Now, why the cells proceed thus, and how it is they form, part of them a brain or an eye, and another part of them a sting, we do not know. So far we have found no means of determining between the different character of different cells. They are all said to look alike, and seem in every way alike. But this differentiation goes on, and is part of that inscrutable process which nature presents us at every turn, and which, to my mind, is to be ascribed simply to the Divine Wisdom. But

in our thinking we have learned to distinguish these cells, learned to individuate them; and we have arrived at the conclusion that they, by their diverse association together, build the complex structure of all animal mechanism, and all the organs thereof, external and internal.

There is a law of creation which we have inferred extends through all creation, — for wherever it has been applied it has been found to work, — the law of growth. All animal mechanism is builded by growth. We know that the cells receive nutriment, divide, and subdivide, and thus the growth goes on. Well, the same law applies to the great mechanism or organization called society. You do not suppose that God created the mountain, and did not create the trees at its base or the plants and shrubs which reach up to the snow line? We are all of us very sure that if the mountain is a creation, all is a creation. And, moreover, the creation is of a certain definite kind. As you ascend a mountain you perceive that the climate changes. And at the same time you perceive that God does not create the hardy little arctic shrubs at the warm base of the mountain and the large trees at the snow line. He follows an order in this as in everything. The arrangement of vegetation is determined by the conditions.

Certainly we may conclude, we are driven to conclude, that if God made the stars and the earth, with its rivers and oceans, and the plants and man, He does not leave society out of creation. While it is true that the will of individuals has a very important bearing upon the structure of society, it is also true that there is a Will and a Wisdom mightier than the individual wills of all combined. And there is a law of

social development. Every individual in the body politic is like the individual cell in the body physical, and performs some function of one sort or another. Therefore it is with society as it is with the bee. Some individuals gravitate to the head, or brain, of the body politic, and to an extent do the thinking or governing of it; some gravitate to industry or production; and some gravitate to the offensive and defensive department. Some societies are like some bees, and appear to develop much more of sting than of honey. These are the strongly military societies, like the North German and others of the present time. In other societies the industrial functions predominate, as in the English and the American. But in every society you will perceive, if you look well into it, that there is a body-growth. Society, like the individual organism, has its head, its feet, its hands, its eyes, its heart. The analogy could be pursued at length were it necessary, but it is not.

Within recent times this body-growth of society has been more rapid and more clearly defined than of old. And this has been brought about by ascertainable causes. When Watt made his first high-pressure engine in Glasgow in 1761, he was simply carrying out some ideas which had accumulated in his own very active and inventive brain. Doubtless he did not stop to consider that in making a construction of iron and brass he would very greatly modify the social order of the world. But that is what he did. He created a new industry, and one destined to affect enormously almost every other industry in the world. For the construction of that Watt engine was followed gradually by the laying of iron tracks all over Europe and this continent, and by the creation

of a new and rapid commerce on all waters. Not only so, but this more rapid commerce both by land and water was contemporaneous with, and made necessary, a more rapid production on the part of labor. Hand production gives place to machine production. In a pioneer society, such as was on this continent a century ago, the settler could do a large proportion of the things necessary to be done for his own necessities. He could be his own carpenter, and build his own dwelling and barns, such as they were. He could mend his own broken implements. His wife and daughters could make the cloth for domestic purposes, and could sew it into necessary clothing. The fuel was at hand, in the trees of the forest which was to be cleared out of the way. The food was to be derived from the crops of the ground, from the flock and herd ; and the very few luxuries could be obtained, or could be left unobtained, as the case might be. Then gradually came the differentiation of industries. Some person more skillful than others became a carpenter, and devoted himself to that. Some other person became a smith, and erected his forge ; and another, who could contrive some kind of transportation for goods, brought the luxuries, loom-made cloths and thread, and various household conveniences, and had a store of them at some centre of population. But the introduction of machinery vastly increases and makes more rapid this differentiation of society. The industrial world is, before our eyes, becoming socialized.

To make a new machine which shall do the work of many skilled hands, worthily excites our admiration for the inventor. And we declare that the inventor is a helper in the general progress of the world. Such he undoubtedly is. But his work nevertheless

has an importance entirely separate from its mechanical features. Its immediate effect may be to throw many hundreds of men out of employment. And inasmuch as these hundreds live by their work, and support their families by it, it follows that this invention may prove a fatal thing to them. In thickly populated regions, where the laborers are more numerous than occasion requires, or precisely as numerous, the introduction of machines which will diminish the demand for labor may be looked upon as a calamity. It has been so regarded. In England the machines were regarded for a time as the enemies of the working man. And when the attempt was made to put them in operation, the mob spirit was aroused, and desperate men threatened to carry fire and destruction through the community. It was easy enough for a reader of the news, seated in his comfortable chair, and sipping his cup of coffee, to declaim against the folly and brutality of the English working man, who set himself against the progress of inventions. But the English working man was thinking of bread and his hungry children. He was saying to himself that there was positive murder in the machineries, because they would make his labor unnecessary. In one view of the case, of course, the man was foolish in thus attempting to obstruct the irresistible progress of things. But he did not know much about progress. He did know that there must be some food for the family, and some kind of shelter and clothing for them. That was the knowledge which had principal influence upon him. What he proposed to do in the emergency was to make some sort of a struggle for existence. And doubtless he must have felt a desperate discouragement as he came to know that his

struggle was with a giant of steel and steam. Enough to say of this struggle for existence, that a wholesale condemnation of our fellow-men, without having first put ourselves in their place to discover, if possible, the cause of their action, thus gaining a sympathetic view of the case, is no wise proceeding for any one.

But the opposition to machineries was in fact an opposition to God's continuous creation of society, and simply could not by possibility be successful. One might as well fight against the stars in their courses as to seek to obstruct the new order of things. And for fifty or more years, while inventions have gone on multiplying themselves, and doing more and more effective work, our human society has been occupied in shifting its ground, so as to contrive to live under the new conditions.

I suppose the statesmen of some centuries ago complacently deemed themselves fully competent to deal with all the problems of government and society. I do not undervalue the greatness of those men, but statesmen of that kind would be of no use to us now. Ludicrously insufficient would be their wisest measures. The reason of that is that we have a new society which, under Divine Providence, is getting itself created day by day. The inventor goes on with his inventions as though under impulsion from a Power greater than himself, as indeed he is. And if he were to be remonstrated with, as a disturber of the peace or order of society, if he were to be shown that by his invention work will be taken from a million pairs of hands and given to mere machines which do not require bread and clothing, he is nevertheless moved on to do his work, halting at no such consideration. Recurring to the principle already laid down, that as is

the individual life-cell to the physical body, so is the individual human being to the body politic, it is quite evident that the life-cell which rises to the brain must do brain-work, and no other. And the man who belongs to the thinking part of the social body must do his work as a thinker, unhindered by considerations of temporary policy.

We witness many new movements peculiar to our times ; and among others, combinations of men and interests in strong association. These movements are differently regarded by different people. By some they are regarded with anxiety, not to say with indignation ; by others with a calm attention, to discover if possible the meaning of them. This last is manifestly the best state of mind.

In 1841 a railroad was completed between Rochester and Syracuse. If I mistake not, a railroad had already been laid between Syracuse and Schenectady, which latter place had been earlier connected with Albany by an iron track. About that time, perhaps earlier, a railroad was constructed between Rochester and Tonawanda. And from Albany to New York was the Hudson River road. It is unimportant to our present purpose to note the origin of the various roads, or to be accurate about the dates of their construction. But there were several companies, or distinct organizations, operating these roads in some loose sort of connection with each other. Then came about a consolidation of these various interests, from Albany to Buffalo, under one government, with the laying of a new track from Syracuse to Rochester. It appears, however, to have been left to the genius of Commodore Vanderbilt to connect all these railroads in a compact system, and to include in that

system roads west of Buffalo. Genius is sometimes rewarded in this world, and Mr. Vanderbilt reaped an immense personal benefit from the result of his schemes. But what was the result to the public? If we assume that the consolidation of the railroad interests began under the management of Mr. Vanderbilt in 1861, and that it practically consummated itself in 1869, the gain to the country by the consolidation is estimated to be as high as six hundred millions of dollars a year.¹ The gain to New York State alone is estimated at seventy-five millions a year. I am not able to verify these estimates, but suppose them to be approximately correct. But it is by the rapidity and continuity of transportation the public is vastly benefited. I suppose the so-called Vanderbilt combinations are matched by the Scott combinations in Pennsylvania, and by other railroad combinations elsewhere. But aside from the economic results, it is difficult to see how society, constituted as it has come to be, could possibly dispense with these immense systems of railroad transportation. I look upon Mr. Vanderbilt as one of the great inventors, able to grasp and comprehend these vast schemes so complex and so far-reaching.

Some one has said: "The inventor, the man of science, is the great disturber of existing conditions. He renders worthless great masses of capital which had been valuable, he takes away the hereditary occupation of vast numbers of laborers who may be capable of doing no other kind of work." Yes, the inflammatory anarchist, with all of his eagerness to break the established usages and principles of society, is not to be compared with the inventor as a disturber;

¹ Behrend's *Socialism and Christianity*.

for the inventor makes social readjustment absolutely necessary. And I would have you mark that this is a part of the perpetual creation of society. It cannot be hindered; it is well that it cannot.

If any movement, broadening and deepening as times goes on, proves itself to belong to the evolution of society, if it is not retrogressive in its tendencies, then it behooves all intelligent persons to take heed of that movement, not to oppose it, but to fall in with it, as a veritable divine process, so as to be ready to make the best of it. Now if there is any well-marked movement of society to-day, it is the movement toward combination of men and interests. It may be called, if such a word were in the dictionaries, socialization.

Railroad combinations we have already briefly traced. However such consolidations may have been brought about, they have been formed, and, as we have discovered, not to the detriment but to the very great advantage of the public. If you examine some insects very carefully, you will find an absence of a well-defined circulatory system. The blood appears to go to various parts of the system, not through veins or arteries, but in a kind of promiscuous manner. But as development goes on, the channels for the blood are formed, in tubes and minute capillaries. That is to say, certain of the life-cells have the function of forming such organs. Well, it is not fanciful to say that our railroad systems and our means of transportation form the circulatory system of the social body, and some men and much power in the shape of capital go to the making of these veins and arteries of social circulation. Other men and other capital go to the making of our social nerve system, the telegraph; and these, too, as we have seen, have a distinct tendency

more and more to consolidate. I believe it is generally understood that the great idea of this consolidation originated practically within the past thirty years. Then, too, it is easy to see how much advantage to the public accrues from the possession of a slower means of communication, afforded by the postal system. We certainly should be at an inestimable loss if it were left to some haphazard lack of system, to get our newspapers and letters to their destination.

I beg you to notice that these social combinations do not come as the result of any elaborate philosophy of human conditions. They are not made by the philosophers, but by the necessities of the case; that is to say, they come in the orderly development of society. And any philosophy of human relations which can be of use to us must be formed upon an acknowledgment and wise consideration of these facts.

But it must be confessed that this process of socialization presents some formidable features in our own time, and that the minds of many are greatly disturbed thereby. I refer, of course, to the industrial combinations on the one hand, and the capitalistic combinations on the other. Inasmuch as industry is so important a part of the social life of any people, and inasmuch as the tendency of the time is so strongly toward combination, it becomes inevitable that such combination will be made, and that it will become more and more potent and strong as time goes on. The hope of breaking the combinations of industry will not be likely to be cherished very long by any one who studies his own times. But this industrial combination, which is as natural as a railroad combination, is offset at once by a combination of capitalistic interests. And these two mighty forces first appear as at

war with each other. That is to be expected. But let us look for a moment at the process. We first have the trades' unions. The industry of each particular trade gets itself into combination for the benefit of the limited number of those engaged in that particular trade. In England, after the introduction of the modern machineries, arose the cutlers' union, the grinders' union, the moulders' union, the union of pattern makers, and a host of others. In this country, after the consolidation of railroads, arose the brotherhood or union of locomotive engineers, of conductors; the trades' unions began to flourish. Then followed the attempt to unite these, as the short and separate railroads were united, into a comprehensive union of all labor interests. The first attempt was not as wise as later attempts will probably be, and doubtless will be succeeded by attempts more sagacious.

But the consolidation of the capitalistic interests, or as we say the formation of trusts, is by perhaps the majority of the people regarded as a more formidable menace to the welfare of society than any other which has ever been made. If, however, we take into consideration the practical inevitableness of it, we may learn to look upon it as an important factor in the continuous creation of society. It certainly would be foolish to imagine that the capitalist could sit idle, and see his capital dissipated, when by combination with his brother capitalists such a calamity could be averted. Whatever the motive of the individual may be, we are called upon to study the facts, and they may be summarized in the language of Professor Andrews (*"Journal of Economics,"* January, 1889): "The associational system of business is in its present magnitude a thing of recent origin. It took its life

from the marked and immediate success of the Standard Oil Trust, created in 1882. The career of this Titan agency has stimulated on all hands the most earnest efforts to imitate or rival it. There is scarcely a single industry in the country which has not, either bodily or in some of its phases or departments, passed under this or that form of associational management. Reports of fresh schemes for business amalgamation literally crowd the press. Joining hands, massing energies, that is emphatically the order of the day in economic affairs."

I have endeavored thus at some length to present to view that tendency toward social combination which characterizes especially our times. The social functions become more and more differentiated, and society itself becomes more and more compacted. It is not my purpose either to criticise or defend these important movements or any of them. I simply mark them as among the more important phenomena in the present evolution of society. In the material world there are two forces, the centripetal and the centrifugal. Both of them are in constant operation throughout the universe. In human affairs the same two forces are seen: the socialistic, or centripetal; the individualistic, or centrifugal. Both have their appropriate places in the development of society. From my stand-point I look upon the present predominance of the social centripetal force as certainly the work of that Divine Wisdom without which there would be no society and no student of it.

He who clothes the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cut down and withereth, shall He not much more work in the higher and highest planes of nature? It must be obvious to any devout and

faithful observer, who really observes, that socialization comes, not by the will of the individual man, but by the will of the Creator of man and of his society. "Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it." To the Christian, that is, to the one who thinks of God as Jesus Christ thought of Him, there will be discerned in all this great movement toward the consolidation of society the operation of a Benevolent Creator, and not some blind operation of chance or of an arbitrary force. He will learn to connect the word "Father" with it, as he has learned to connect that word with some of his personal experiences, and will expect, as the outcome of all social consolidations, a human brotherhood, wherein human life shall become beautiful and gracious, and human society shall be welded, not into conflicting departments, but into a coöperating and wonderfully diversified unity.

I said that it did not concern my present purpose either to criticise or defend these great movements which tend to social combinations of all kinds. Certainly, in respect to some of them, the very sharpest criticism would be applicable. But what then? Many a slave-ship has been built and launched for that infamous traffic which has afterward proved most serviceable in the suppression of the slave trade. And whether a ship floats the black flag, or other, provided she is staunch and well compacted, she will serve a useful purpose, when rightly manned and officered.

Human society, consolidated, as we now see it, into a body of diverse departments and functions, must come to have a right spirit or soul in it; and the right soul for such a body must need be, to put it in modern phraseology, altruistic. "Bear ye one another's

burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," is the ancient statement of modern altruism. There is no way in which these burdens can be borne, except by combination, and the consolidation of society makes an easy yoke and a light burden.

I believe social consolidation will add incalculably to the wealth and welfare of the world; that it will vastly increase an economical use of that wealth; that it will add to and not subtract from the liberty of the individual; that it will relieve men from the exasperating pressure of the motives of fear; that it will render the serving of our fellow-men a pleasure to us. The evolution of society opens before us as the grandest arena of the operation of a benevolent God.

XVI.

SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM.

“For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.” — ROMANS xii. 3.

VERY difficult has it been to many thoughtful persons to place a proper limit to self-esteem, or self-estimation. We are individual and have our separate responsibilities; we are also members of a society. Which is the more important? There are times when self-estimation rises; other times when it diminishes both in individual experience and in national or associated experience. In the times of absolute despotism, the general education of people is toward a depreciation of the valuation of the individual. If people are supposed to exist for the benefit of a governing body, or a single ruler, the individual is a very unimportant factor in anything. He is a mere drop in a stream which carries a boat. The boat afloat on the stream is the governing body, and that is everything; and the drop in the stream, *i. e.*, the individual citizen, is nothing. Were the drop gone altogether out of the stream, what harm? In times and places wherein a man may have his head cut off at a nod of satrap or shah, the individual life is looked upon as of no moment. One may indeed cling to life, but that will be more from the animal instinct than from an intelligent valuation of life.

Then, too, men seem to have learned from Nature herself that the individual is nothing. The generations come and go in quick succession. The rivers run into the sea, but the sea is not full, and the waters return whence they came. Evaporation, and precipitation in rain or snow, the running of streams and rivers, and the same old round over and over again. An Oriental king, who was also something of a philosopher, came to the conclusion that life and all its concerns belonged to the order of vanities. A vanity is something of slight account. From his stand-point—which was not the best—he was right about it. But a very different stand-point has been taken since his time.

I desire to call your attention to the fact that the earlier education of our race has been to a great extent socialistic. And even intensely so. Society has been made everything of and the individual has been made nothing of. Society, represented by the government of it, has determined everything. Up to a comparatively late period society, or its government, its head, prescribed pretty much all things. And it did so not only in regard to outward things, such as social conduct, but also in respect to a man's beliefs and thoughts. The government, representing society at large, determined the clothes that should be worn by the people, and the colors of the cloths that must be used in the making of these clothes. That which is now left to the indefinite despotism of fashion, was then regulated in a more definite manner. Among the Romans, for instance, purple was reserved for the emperor, and other colors for different classes of the population. This still survives to some extent in the Roman church, the spiritual princes and other digni-

taries being distinguished from others by the colors of their official costumes. The occupation, behavior, attitude, and bearing of men were not left to individual choice or caprice, but were established by society. Such a state of things belongs to the more primitive stage of the evolution of society. This, I think, deserves the careful consideration of all thoughtful men, and especially of all religious men. We have our Bible, coming from the Hebrew portion of the race, to give us the history of the growth of the now dominant religion, and that from its very roots. We regard the study of this book profitable, largely because it gives us the development of religion, and so throws great light upon our path.

But there is an unwritten book, or book written only in detached portions, to disclose to us the manner of divine creation as it has been carried on in all races. That too has its very great lesson for us. Foundations, although hidden from casual view, are of immense import. They underlie structures which rest on them, and depend upon them. The foundations of our civil and social structures of the present, it will be well for us to remember, must determine in some measure the shape and character of that which is now being builded. When, therefore, we find, as we do find, that socialism is no new thing under the sun, but a very old thing, and that it is practically fundamental to any society, we do well to give due heed to that, and to endeavor to see what it means.

I shall ask you to discharge from your minds those ideas of socialism which belong characteristically to its modern phases. At present I have nothing to say of the socialism which has its apostles in Berlin and Brussels, in Paris and in London, in which latter city

the socialistic sentiment and philosophy have grown from nothing to very considerable proportions within the past ten years. These developments are very important, no doubt, but not so important, as it appears to me, as the earlier socialism of a slower growth, and which was all but universal. It appears that all nations, tribes, clans, and other associations were socialistic. Witness is borne to this by the traditions and histories of Europe and the East, by the monuments and ruins, by the communal houses and villages and other remains on our own continent. What I mean by the socialism of early society is simply that society was everything and the individual was nothing. But we must have learned that such a society is not the best; it may be, and very often has been, the worst. And therefore we behold, in the very midst of an all-prevalent socialism, another movement, very faint and feeble at first, but acquiring strength and momentum as time went on. This was a movement, not to counteract and destroy socialism — for that would be the destruction of society itself, and the possibility of it — but to correct and balance and prevent the excesses of socialism. Prophets and teachers, like those of Israel, arise, one after the other, seeking to arouse a sense of individual responsibility and to develop individual worth. They ascribe the evil character and the degradation of the nation to the lack of a true individualism. Socrates, who of all the Greeks is the most venerated, in his apology before his judges, declares that he has not aspired to high place in the state, that he has made it his work to go about among the people, from man to man, to question each one, to expose to each one his own wrong state, his ignorance and vanity, and rouse him to a change of life and improvement of con-

duct. I am aware that there are those who believe that because God cared for Hebrews, and had teachers and prophets for them, He therefore cared nothing for Greeks and others, and provided no instruction or instructors for them. Whereas the fact that God cared for Hebrews, and taught them by prophets and teachers, is a grand testimony that He cared for Greeks, and all other peoples, and provided such instruction for them as was fit. And this divine instruction, the best teaching, has appealed to, and has developed personal responsibility. According to it, the individual is no mere drop in the stream of humanity, an insignificant atom in a mass, but a distinct moral being, and as important in his place as the total society is in its place.

And when the Christ appeared, He taught, not in opposition to this instruction of the law and prophets of an earlier period, but in expansion or fulfillment of it. He appealed to the individual conscience and judgment as no other has done. And yet He has been understood by many to be preëminently the teacher of socialism. He and His apostles are credited with having been in a way both socialists and communists. Indeed, it must be confessed that the Christian church, upon its first organization after the day of Pentecost, was communistic in polity. Nevertheless I would invite your attention to the fact that mere socialism, or socialism by itself, was the less developed form of human association. And it did not prove itself good, but very often, and very much the reverse of good. That kind of socialism demands and makes necessary an undervalued individual; that is, an ignorant and enslaved individual. How can you get good society when all the materials which are to compose it are

base, or of inferior mental and moral quality? Wherefore it may be properly said of Jesus Christ that He of all teachers of mankind was the individualist. Because He above all others seems to have left society, as such, to shift for itself, and to have turned His attention almost exclusively upon the individual. He did not propose a conservation of the society He found; He even predicted its dissolution and downfall. He did propose a regeneration of individual life, a development of that upon the right basis. And of course the effect of that would be, in the nature of the case, a very different society. It would be a society constructed not upon the principle of outward compulsions, but upon the inner life of the individuals composing it. Accordingly the effect of His teaching is a new movement toward personal liberty. It was long in gathering force, because the church became increasingly socialistic in its practice and policy. After the conquest of the Roman empire by the Christian religion, the church took its model largely from that empire, and became, and continues to be, a socialistic organization. It very early and very strongly interfered with personal liberty, such liberty as there was, and prescribed to men, as the older socialisms had done, their opinions and faiths, or in other words their thoughts. The individual was denied the right of convictions or of private judgment; everything was referred to the society as represented by its governing head. Thus the intense individualism of Jesus was entirely lost sight of, and in place of it the old socialism established itself. Of course some of the teachings of Christ were put into this old socialism, but it was new wine in old bottles, and in due time produced its legitimate result of breaking the bottles more or less.

With Luther came the revival of the individualistic teachings of Christ. It was private faith against the society faith. It was the emergence of the private individual from his long enslavement into the beginnings of liberty. The importance of this revolt of Luther from the haughty and long-seated socialism of the church can hardly be overestimated. Without parody it may be admitted to the critics that what Luther did chiefly stand for in his conflict with the powers that were, was the right of Luther to exercise a private judgment. We may as well consent that he did not care so greatly for the right of those who differed with him, as for his own. He had his weaknesses in common with all of us. He would not yield to Zwingli an equal right with himself to exercise his private judgment, it is claimed. Very well; grant it. In fighting his battle, however, he fought ours. If he held his principle in an imperfect way, he still held it strongly and bravely, in his own time, and under his circumstances. The doctrine is sufficiently plain, and becomes plainer, however the teacher of it may restrict it, or however inconsistently he may hold it. Personal liberty, the right of the individual as respects that which is most inward and vital, carries all other rights with it. At last the individual has got a recognition in the world; not any longer to be regarded by the intelligent as a mere drop in the stream, or an atom in a mass, but as a separate moral being, distinctly invested with rights, and especially to have his own judgments and convictions, and to guide himself by those judgments and convictions. I suppose the rise of the idea of personal liberty in modern times will be dated differently by different thinkers, but to my mind no such distinct cause of it is anywhere visible in all the horizon of history as this man Luther.

In any event the great idea of personal liberty has come, and doubtless it has come to stay. In various ways it has been developing, and with great disturbance of the old equilibrium. It is becoming quite evident that the old socialism cannot long hold the new individualism, either in church or state. If the chariot of the French monarch, making swift journey from Paris to Versailles crushed some child of the peasant, it represented the state rolling over and crushing the individual. When the tables were turned, and the individual asserted himself, and began to shear off the heads of his oppressors, that represents the individual rolling over and crushing the state. But this revolt of individualism is one of the most frightful of all phenomena yet seen on this earth, resulting in that welter of all confusions and terrors known as the French Revolution.

I have spoken of Christ as preëminently the teacher of individualism. I have spoken of the revival of personal liberty (an idea which had been retired by the Roman church) under the leadership of Luther. It is well that we should examine the teachings of Christ with reference to this matter. He did not teach that society is everything and the individual nothing. He did seem to esteem the individual as the court of last appeal.¹ And yet it was a mob, that is, a mere aggregation of individuals, skillfully managed, that demanded His crucifixion. Foreseeing that, He still held on His way, addressing Himself to persons, counseling and commanding them to forsake every evil way, and to do righteousness and to be righteous. Such counsels and commands are intensely

¹ "And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" — LUKE xii. 57.

personal. What does it all mean? Does this appeal to the individual, this putting the individual to the front, prove salutary? Suppose society were everywhere broken, and every private person did according to his own will, would that by possibility be a good state of things? The very opposite of a good state of things. An unendurable state of things. But suppose that the will of every individual were good and excellent. Then, of course, except for errors of judgment, there would be nothing to fear. But as men are now, if the barriers of social organization — barriers from custom and law — were thrown down, unspeakable calamities would immediately follow. With all the restrictions and restraints imposed by law and usage the selfishness of men renders life not worth living to multitudes. Abolish the restraints and no one would have a life worth living. At least no one would have a life of which he could reasonably be sure from day to day, whether worth living or not. Therefore the socialism, even of that kind which makes society everything, and the private individual nothing, has had its exceedingly important use. Even that is a part of the divine order, the divine creation. Body-making antedates soul-making. And so the ancient societies, depending on force and exterior compulsion, were as necessary as any other stage of creation.

Jesus emphasized the worth and value of the individual. But there was an end in view. That was the reconstruction of society. Though a man is individuated, and set off as by himself, a moral and responsible being, his conduct inevitably and always has a social reference. The old fundamental law for the individual is at the same time the bond of society. For if the first of the two commandments on which

hang all law and all the prophets is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind and with all thy soul and with all thy strength" (and that is individualistic), the second is like it, but is socialistic: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And it becomes evident at a glance that the teachings of Christ, so direct and so personal, must end in socialism of a pure sort. Let the individual be developed in the highest degree therefore, and made as strong as possible in his personal character; let his personality not be crippled and restricted, but expanded, and he will all the better serve the uses and purposes of society.

It is a tradition of the Jews that when the temple known as the Temple of Solomon was builded, it was accomplished in a wonderfully quiet manner, so that "there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building." In quarries near to, or possibly remote from, Jerusalem, the stones were taken out and fashioned in most careful manner. One group of stone-cutters here, and another there, and others in various places where there was supply of the material, were at work cutting, shaping, smoothing, and in every way bringing each stone to some special shape. An observer would see these men at work in various localities, each one devoting his attention to one stone, and would wonder about it. "Why do you so carefully shape these stones? Why not, instead of doing that, build something of them? Stones are good for nothing left separate as you leave them, be they never so deftly fashioned. Why not expend your enterprise, not in shaping them one by one, but in getting all the stones of whatever shape together into some kind of walls here, — any kind of walls? You can have your strong cement, to keep

the stones from falling apart. Do you not see that we are here to set up walls and enclose spaces with them?" Yes, that is partly what we are here for. But the workman would keep on with his labor, contriving to get a true edge on the stone in hand, getting it to right size, chipping, hammering, smoothing, until that one stone should be to his mind. And doubtless this workman would know little enough of the use of the stone, when he had got done with it. That might be in the head of the designer, or in Solomon's, but not definitely in his. But when these stones are brought together on Zion's hill, because each one was of true proportion and size, and had been dealt with by itself, it at once became part and parcel of a building of proportion and beauty, a marvel to all Israel and the Gentiles. And the building ascends into the air, silently and coherently, the noise and strain and bustle of building for once absent.

I suppose this Hebrew tradition, if strictly read, would imply that no mortar was used, inasmuch as no sound of trowel was heard. The stones so well prepared as not to require a fastening. That is, to say the least, doubtful. But if you can imagine individual men and women so true and excellent and responsible in character as to be right altogether, adequately blending justice and mercy and all other excellent qualities in their conduct, then you can imagine a society which is not strongly bound together by outward laws and restrictions. Outward laws, police, criminal courts, and the like are for evil-doers and not for well-doers. Were all well-doers they would be useless. But for the present and probably for some time to come such a society is to be imagined; it is not likely to be realized.

A certain Christian apostle, who had a keener insight than most men of his time, shrewdly perceived that personal responsibility and liberty would inevitably be carried to excess. From an under-estimate people would swiftly go, when once started, to an over-estimate of themselves. No matter how guarded the Christian teachings as against selfishness, how explicit in respect to self-denial, the most of people are not learners of related truths, but truths isolated. Therefore the warning Paul raises against excessive individualism. He declares there is another truth, supplementary of a true individualism, a truth which just balances it. And then he goes on in a strain of socialistic teaching almost unparalleled in literature. He likens true society to a physical body, with various members, and all the members vitally coöperative.

Excessive individualism renders men almost incapable of coöperation. We know how the idea of personal liberty has grown, and especially in this country where the conditions have been most favorable. The proposition that men do think more highly of themselves than they ought to think needs only to be stated, and requires no demonstration. It is easy to see how the principle has worked economically. Competition is said to be the life of trade. Well, it is also the life of war. One man competes with another in trade. He goes on in competition until it becomes often a sort of life-and-death struggle with the other. What is it but the old struggle for existence waged by countless races of animals and plants? It is the same thing, only carried into a higher plane. If men beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, and yet contrive in some manner to kill each other, or deprive each other of necessary

subsistence by means of these peaceful instruments, the difference is not material. It is the old battle of man with man, only not so ostensibly cruel. With unlimited competition there is simply unlimited struggle continued. The stronger will succeed and the weaker will go to the wall. But that tends to throw society back again into primitive socialism, wherein the strong prevailed and ruled society, and the private individual was sunk out of consideration. Against unlimited competition, therefore, rises the protest of mankind; and as has been suggested by an able thinker the very competitors themselves are the first to discern the evils of it. They are the ones who take measures to counteract it, and have been forced to form their combinations of monopoly in manufactured goods, and in labor. An illustration is furnished by the writer alluded to, showing what necessarily results from rigorous enforcement of the law of competition. Take the competition between laborers for wages: "The real strife is between two or more laborers, and not between labor and capital, as is generally supposed. . . . Let us suppose that when times are good and the laborer is getting good wages, he thinks he can support a family and marries. Or he may do so in the heyday and flush of youth and without any thought for the future. Whatever leads him to marry, his family becomes a "fixed charge" upon him to support. It is obvious that it is extremely important for his own, his family's, and the social well-being, that he earn enough to support them decently, to give them wholesome food, warm clothing, and a fair education. Hard times overtake him, the demand for labor slackens, the married man has to compete with the single man, and the latter, having only himself to support,

can afford to work for less. But the former has more depending on him; he must find work or his family will perish, and so the competition goes on until starvation wages are reached and they can go no lower. His wife and children die for want of proper food, and he is just able perhaps to keep body and soul together.”¹

A man ought to esteem himself so that he shall employ his physical, mental, and moral faculties, and develop them aright. It is the weakest and least effective, and possibly vainest, man who lacks a due self-respect. He who has no self-respect does not know how to respect his fellow-man. But he ought not to over-estimate himself, since, if he does, he is not related justly to his fellows, and adds to the social friction. He is a constant factor in the ill-condition of men and cannot avoid so being. Let him therefore consider that while he is a moral being, and must stand strong in his own personality, he nevertheless belongs to a body of many members. And the better he is in his personality, the purer, the more decisively right, the better it shall be for that body. So the Apostle Paul expands the teaching of Christ, and it is probable that a still farther expansion along lines of scientific thought will increasingly enlighten our times.

No one can tell what revolutions and counter revolutions of society may have already stored themselves up for explosive operation within the new century or even half century. No one can know what character the revolutions will take, whether the earth, as often before, shall be drenched in blood, or not. It is idle to speculate. It is perhaps worse than idle to antici-

¹ R. Matthews, *Competition and Monopoly*.

pate evils which may never come. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. But of one thing we may be sure, that from a perverted and excessive individualism ill will come, because in itself it is an evil, and the parent of a numerous brood of evils. On the other hand, a mechanical socialism which crushes the individual, or reduces him to a mere factor in the state, cannot make any permanent success in this world, since it is a recurrence to a primitive type. And the chariot wheels of creation do not roll in that direction.

I believe there will be a new socialism, in which the individual will not be crushed and insignificant. It seems to be coming with rapidity. World-wide commerce is bringing it. Telegraphs under water and over land are bringing it. Interchange of opinion is bringing it. Agitation brings it. Opposition brings it. But how shall its quality be determined? Some men would make society as a log-hut is made. The choppers chop each tree down off from its own roots, and trim off the branches, and saw it into lengths, and hew off the knots, and then pile up the timbers. But the trees are gone, and logs are left. And when the thing is done, it is only a log-hut. You cannot any longer make society in that way, because we more and more see that society is composed of living people, and the life of each has its roots in God. The thing to do is to make the tree good and let it grow and branch as it will.

We come therefore to the fundamental proposition of religion, and that is simple and intensely personal. "Thou, O man, whoever thou art, hast thy conscience, through which thou has speech with the Eternal One. Thou art an evil-doer. No new or old contrivance of society can make thee a doer of good. Whatever

social reconstruction may come in the future, it is necessary for thee to cease from thy perverseness now; to be no longer a transgressor of the laws of life. The past, reaching back into the hazy infinities, thou canst in no wise change. For much of it thou wert not responsible. But the present is in thy hands. Thou hast thine inheritance from the lower races to contend with; thou hast thy tendencies to evil which have come to thee from a thousand sources. But the imperative upon thee now is to cease to do evil and to learn to do well, and thy God is thy Saviour. Put thy trust in Him, and seek good to pursue it, and thou shalt prevail. And thus shalt thou help to bring in a better and nobler social state."

XVII.

FAITH AND INTUITION.

“Now faith is the assurance (confidence) of things hoped for, the proving (conviction) of things not seen. For therein the elders had witness borne to them.” — HEB. xi. 1, 2.

“Yet I doubt not through the ages
One increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened
With the process of the suns.”

LOCKSLEY HALL.

FAITH is a word which belongs chiefly to religion. It certainly does not belong to science. Faith is spoken of, in one important definition of it, as a confidence of things hoped for, a conviction of facts when they are not seen. The man of science has a conviction of facts after he has seen them and properly tested them, and not before. That may be said to be the difference between religion and science; and unless that difference is borne in mind, one will be confused in respect to the whole matter. Many people feel that whatsoever is not scientific is not true, and that since faith is something entirely separate from science it is, to say the least, unimportant. Or perchance faith is worse than unimportant; it may be altogether untrue; therefore science ought to fight it, and if possible destroy it. And there has been, there is now, a conflict between science and faith. Who is responsible for this conflict? It seems to me that there is a divided responsibility, and that it belongs to the representatives of science and the representatives of religion.

In the first place, the scientific man has been held to a most strict and punctual attention to facts and phenomena. It is his business to be accurate. He finds facts and their relations. That is of exceedingly high value, as we all must acknowledge. Now the religious man comes in contact with the scientific man, and proceeds to talk from his stand-point of faith. But this religious man is not at all clear as to the nature of faith itself, and presents to the scientific man an article of faith which proves contrary to some finding of science; the scientific man bluntly declares that this article of faith is opposed by an article of science. The representative of faith insists that the science must be in fault. The scientific man rejoins that he can prove the finding of science to the reason of any intelligent mind. And the religious man declines to accept this proof. The effect of such an attitude is often to rouse in the mind of the scientific man a feeling of derision toward faith. He says to himself: "It is evident that faith consists in believing something whether it is true or not. And it appears also that the people who have faith are not so concerned as to the truth of a matter as they ought to be. They care only for faith. I therefore can have no use for faith. As an honest man I will contrive to get along without it."

But is not the scientific man in fault in taking such a stand? Clearly in fault, if you will look well into it. For it is his business to make cautious examination of the facts and phenomena which fall under his observation. And here is a phenomenon of which he makes only a careless observation. Ought he not to consider that the religious man who does not care for the truth of an article of his faith is precisely the kind of a person to misrepresent faith or anything else?

Ought he not, then, to get at some real representation of it? Certainly he ought, before he indulges in an attack upon faith. There is a vast deal of misrepresentation in the world, and not a little carelessness. It is the duty of the scientific man, a duty more imperative upon him than upon others, to guard himself against these misrepresentations and all this bulk of human carelessness. It is unscientific not to do so.

A scientific man knows what science is. How did he find out? Suppose he had stopped some person on the street, the first person he happened to meet, and asked him: "My friend, will you have the goodness to tell me what science is?" "With pleasure," the person responds; "I know all about it. Science consists in boiling some dirty liquid over a spirit lamp, in a test-tube, and getting a vile odor in the room. That is science." Well, the inquirer thinks that he will not interest himself in science if that is it. Presently he meets another man and asks him, "What is science?" "I can tell you. It is having your pockets full of bottles, and carrying around a tin box, and picking up worms and snails for the bottles and putting weeds in your tin box. That is science." And that is n't enticing. And so the man, ambitious of being a votary of science, concludes that he will not turn his attention that way. Of course any person fit to be a student of science would not seek its definition in that manner. And why one should take the answers of any kind of a religious man, in definition of faith, is difficult to comprehend.

Connected with the history of the development of the Christian faith is a story. This story occupies a few lines in a book of almost incomparable beauty and truth. I refer to the book known as that of Jonah. A

representative of faith carries this story to a scientific man as an article of faith. He says: "It is necessary for you to accept this tale, and believe it, if you would be a partaker in the Christian faith." The scientific man hears the story, and at once declares that he cannot believe it. "Well, but you must believe it, because it belongs to the general volume of our faith." "But I cannot believe it. I know something about whales. And I know that whales are not made to swallow such a large object as a man. They don't feed upon that sort of food. Then if by any means a man were swallowed by a whale, it would be sure death to the man. That is what I see to be the truth of the case." Now if the man insists upon the belief of this tale, as being an article of faith, he has simply misrepresented faith, and has done so in a way which is excusable only upon the ground of lack of information. And while it is perfectly right for the scientific man to reject that particular statement or any like it, it is not right for him to draw a wide conclusion from such insufficient data as to the invalidity of faith itself.

I would ask your attention to a definition of the word faith, as given by an unknown writer. It is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the authorship of which is probably beyond discovery. Perhaps it is better that the maker of this definition is unknown, since the definition must rest upon its own merit, rather than upon the authority of any great name: "Faith is a confidence of things hoped for; a conviction of facts when they are not seen." That the facts or truths here spoken of are not facts in history, or facts in any kind of visibility whatsoever, is evident enough from the definition. They are facts or truths which lie beyond investigation, and which cannot be proved. We

may well consider that in an indefinite manner all sorts of men, given at all to contemplation, have come to some degree of hope that there is a Great Being who has an interest in us. A great Invisible Being, who has created, and who in some way upholds, all things. Hope stirs in the heart; hope that behind all clouds, storms, human vicissitudes, and evil is One who is stable and good. This hope deepens. And there comes a confidence and a conviction in respect to the hoped for and the invisible. Many of the men of old had this confidence and conviction, and lived "according to faith." The most interesting portion of history dates from this confidence and conviction. It was this which gave the moral tone to those leaders of men who led to better things.

Look, I pray you, at these ancient worthies, spoken of as living "according to faith." What were their sources of information? They looked abroad at things, and saw the sky full of stars at night, full of sunlight by day. Saw everything in fact which nature continually presents to the contemplative soul. But how about all these things? How did they come to be? The answer to that question must be given, if it is given at all, from within. Do what one may to reason out final cause, from a great mass of effects, or to show by sparks of logic that there is a Being, like ourselves in some way, only on a scale of measurelessness, if we may so speak, and we get nowhere. Design and designer, and all that business so familiar to the mind of mankind for a long time, helps little enough to find the invisible. And these worthies of old knew little enough of the logical method of finding out God. I suspect that no man of any age did ever or could accurately reason out and prove a final

cause, which was even approximately final. But always the man who found God did so, not as a philosopher, but by the high light of his own intuitions. If the simple story of Abraham is taken as a representative story of these ancient worthies who lived according to faith, you will clearly see what the faith is. We first encounter this man in some Eastern land, a member of a religious community. He is a man of the contemplative sort, hopeful, too, as may be seen, and quite convinced of the feebleness and folly of the religion prevailing around him. There were reasoning processes in his mind, and those probably of a high order for the time; but it is not by these he finds God. It is by direct intuition or by faith, which is another name for the same thing. And this grows in him until his surroundings become intolerable to him, and he moves out of them to others. Probably to our childish imagination there has been presented the picture of Abraham as receiving a visit from God. But there is nothing in the history of such men to lead us at all to think of God as a visitor. It seems that Abraham felt intuitively that there was an invisible government for him and for all men. A right and steadfast government. A guide for him and for all others, so far as they would consent to guidance. And not a guidance by custom, and popular usage, nor by a religion which comes by descent — but by faith, or intuition. That is the meaning of Abraham and his history.

It cannot be too strongly asserted that faith, what may be properly called faith, does not come from proof. At least it does not come from scientific proof, and it does not in any way relate to visibilities. For if you take the word intuition, and put it in place of

faith (not indeed as a complete synonym for it, but as being of the same order in philosophy that faith is in religion), and try to use it upon things recorded in histories, sacred or other, your intuition is of very small use to you as thus applied. History records the death of Cæsar at the hands of conspirators. You accept the story. But your intuition, if it touches the matter at all, does so very remotely. You cannot know by faith that somebody stabbed a Roman named Cæsar. Some one writes the event down. It gets itself thus recorded in the history, and corroborated in various ways. There is nothing improbable about it. It is accepted as one of the visibilities of time. But when you find that many people supposed that a beautiful statue of a goddess or a god was made in heaven, and was let down out of heaven to be put in a temple, that involves a very different group of principles. There is improbability in that. And that is rejected.

There is, in these latter days, under grace of heaven, a science, growing more complete in its tools and means, and in skillful use of them, to which all phenomenal things are referred. It is precisely the province of science to deal as best it may with the visibilities, past and present, and not with things hoped for and invisible. Science knows that the winds are not contained in and imprisoned under some mountain, to be let out on occasion by a wind-god. Science knows something of the laws of storm-movements and storm-centres, and the like; and out of this knowledge, together with the careful observation of conditions, gets the probabilities of the humidity of the air, the temperature and other things for particular localities. Science can indeed look a little ahead, in this manner. But it casts its glance backward too, and is compelled

to do away with the old poetical-religious notion of gods of storms and dungeons of winds. In discovery of actual facts, lying in visibility before the eyes of men, and actual relations of these facts, science must needs change the feelings and information of intelligent people with reference to ancient things.

But has this province of science anything whatever to do with the intuition? I fail to see that it has. For faith, by its definition, is the inward conviction and confidence of the invisible and the hoped-for. And science has to do strictly with the visible. That is to say, the respective departments of faith and science are widely separate. And it would not be difficult to see this if men were careful to distinguish faith, as always of the order of intuition; an inward conviction and confidence. But they do not thus carefully distinguish, and mischief enough is the result of it. Revelation is looked upon very largely as the object of faith. Now revelation is distinctly a visibility, and therefore could not be an object of faith, unless faith failed to be intuitive. Says the unknown author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, by whom the definition of faith is given: "By faith (not because we have been told so) we understand that the ages were set in order by the word of God." A great many people understand nothing of the sort. It is because they lack the intuition. And one who has the intuition cannot prove his own conviction to one who lacks it. What proof is there? The heavens declare the glory of God to such as are convicted of God. They declare something to others, but not the glory of God.

But to return to the proposition of the unknown author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. By faith we understand that the ages were put in order or framed

together, by the word of God. We might look back at the geologic ages. We might go back thousands of centuries, possibly, to that age in which the earth was devoid of life. And starting there, look upon the beginnings of life in its lowest form. In the lifeless age, the air, as we discover, must have been loaded with carbonic acid, and no organism could live under such circumstances. Vast quantities of this poison are withdrawn to be united with lime, thus forming limestone; and there was the age of vegetation and water animals. More of the carbonic acid gas was withdrawn by vegetation, the carbon becoming coal; and air-breathing animals came. It was their age. The process of the withdrawal of the carbonic acid gas from the atmosphere, repeated often, was always making a higher age possible. And meanwhile certain minerals of the metallic sort are formed by slow chemical processes, leaching through the soil to form veins for future use. But animals cannot make any use of coal, nor are they artificers in iron and the other metals. To the man who has the intuition of Mind and Will, there is abundant evidence of prevision in all these geologic ages. That is to say, the ages were being set in order, with reference to a higher order to follow. To some minds, the ages simply grew out of each other according to some method. And that is all that can be said or thought on the subject. But to the mind which has the intuition of God, that is, the man of faith, this much is evident: that these ages were not left ungoverned, but were subject to the mind of One who is continually preparing the way for the higher, and the highest, product of creative wisdom. Deadly carbonic acid here, having its reign and purpose, was not to be a finality, and was not left to be always

deadly, but set in such relations as to be of incalculable service in due time.

Then when man is at last reached, he stands upon the vantage ground of ordered ages. For there is an order, and not mere chaotic disorder, under his feet. An order into which he will more and more penetrate as he acquires the use of his faculties. Lights stud the space above him, masses upon masses of them, scattered, as appears, by mere chance; but as time goes on he will be amazed at the spectacle of a wide-spreading order in the sky, in which every tiny light-point stands.

Now the spectacle of order, which order science is continually laying bare to our inspection and admiration, would seem to make the intuition of an Ordainer of it easy and natural. It would seem so. But it has not universally proved so. There are other factors in the problem, which present difficulties. In the case of our ancient worthies, Abraham and others, the intuition prevailed over the difficulties. In the case of multitudes the difficulties prevail over the intuition. Hume, the historian, dining once with a company of learned men, eighteen in number, remarked that he did not think there were any atheists, and was surprised to find that in the company were fifteen atheists, "and three did not know what to think of it."

Let us continue to look upon the ages, which by faith are understood to be set in order or framed together by the word of God. Man is here, his age having come; but his age is of many ages. Beginning with the absence of moral life, the feeble first of that comes, and the increase, amidst confusions and occasional apparent chaos. And meantime, according to faith, or the intuition, God is setting all this in

order. Well, we look back upon these human ages, and are not pleased with them. Prevailing ignorance, brutality, cruelty, bloodshed, rapine, and robbery, the strong in power and luxury, and the weak in slavery and want, and the people making to themselves gods of mud and other plastic material. Gods they had which appear as carnivorous monsters, hungry and thirsty, with an insatiable appetite for human flesh and sufferings. And is it possible that God had an order in those unblest ages? A kind of atmosphere loaded with moral carbonic acid, and not all of it by any means yet withdrawn, seems to have hung heavy over them. And yet a betterment of conditions and of moral atmosphere continually shows itself. An order thus does make its appearance. Chiefs, kings, universal monarchs, conquerors, come upon the stage one after the other, to play their respective parts. The very powers that are, be they good powers or the contrary, are ordained of God. The powers which crush other powers are ordained of God. The king is dethroned, not by chance and not by grim caprice of a mob, but by divine ordinance.

Then God is responsible? Yes; above all other conceivable beings, responsible; holding a sovereign responsibility, however, in connection with a subject responsibility of His moral creatures, unto which we do well that we take most earnest heed. For it is this subject responsibility with which we have to do, and not with the sovereign responsibility. This is a thing deep beyond our present fathoming, and not to be profitably dwelt upon now. But in all ages God has raised up such men as had faith, or intuition, to do the best work of creation, and chiefly to forward the revelation upon its course. These men of faith are

not described to us as perfect men, nor as perfectly informed men. They have their intuitions of the hoped for and the invisible in connection with their respective ages. They live in the midst of the visibilities of their times and are duly impressed by them. But they are represented to us as depending immediately upon God, as men of faith. Their life and work are governed by that dependence. They endure as seeing Him who is invisible.

Now the faith of modern times is not characteristically of that same intuitive kind. It has been disturbed and confused by the taking in of a great host of visibilities, or assumed visibilities, as proper objects of faith. They are not such, and in the nature of the case could not be such. For we have found faith to be a conviction of invisible facts or truths. Therefore those things which properly belong to the domain of science do not properly belong to the domain of faith.

Many Christians regard the Bible as an object of faith. It is most manifestly one of the visible things in this world of ours open to the inspection of all men. It is a record of the faiths of men of faith. It is therefore the record of the revelation. It gives us a view of how the ages have been set in order by the word of God. This record is a phenomenon, and as such it is taken in hand by scientific experts of one kind and another. In the study of it, such a study as has been given no other book, a great many incredible things have been found. That is, things incredible to the man of science. In the ages which this book gives record of, the distinction between the credible and the incredible, which now obtains, was not made. It could not have been made. And the so-

called faith of many has been shaken. But no scientific criticism has successfully assailed the intuition. And the intuition is the faith of the men of faith. Conviction of the invisible, confidence of the hoped-for. That I take to be unassailable. What is faith in the Bible? It is confidence in the work done by men of old. So much of that work as corresponds with intuition is valid to us — and only so much. I beg you to note that it was by such best judgment of various men our Bible took the shape in which we have it now. Was their best judgment infallibly correct? The whole case turns on that. If we have such supreme confidence in the men who determined what books should go into the Bible, as that we accept their decision as final, then we have faith in men, and not the intuitive faith of Abraham and other worthies.

But who are these men? Let us see. The first century of our Christian era produced a large number of literary works beside those contained in the New Testament. It became therefore necessary to determine upon the canon. Those works which were of genuine apostolic origin, and those which truly represented the Christian truth, must, in some manner, be separated from the bulk of the literature. But it was impossible to draw a distinct line, because representative men differed in regard to the value of different books. The Epistle of Barnabas, that of Jude, and to the Hebrews, and the Shepherd of Hermas, were highly regarded by some and not by others. Down to the middle of the second century Christians used the Old Testament exclusively for their authoritative expositions of truth. Up to the beginning of the third century we do not find any one speaking of

the New Testament writings as inspired in the same sense in which the Old Testament was held to be inspired. But then the interest of the church began to centre around the later writings. The books were collected. There was doubt in regard to the Epistle of Jude, the second of Peter, second and third of John, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and others. Upon the other books there was a general consensus, except as to the book of Revelation, which was regarded with disfavor by the Western church. Suffice it to say that in the year 360 the Council or Synod of *Laodicea* made the first official list (not including the Revelation of John), and forbade the public reading of uncanonical books. In the year 405 Pope Innocent I. fixed the canon by decree, as it now stands.¹

I conceive that the final fixing of the canon of the New Testament by decree of the Pope, at the opening of the fifth century, was and is of the highest importance; that the decision in respect to the books admitted and excluded was a wise decision. But all this belongs not to the province of faith, or the intuition. The Bible is with us incalculably valuable if used as an aid to faith, and not as its object. For the moment it is made an object, science assails the position and carries it. Because science plainly enough declares some things recorded as phenomena in the book are not credible. And when once that is discovered to be true, as soon or late it will be, the faith will be made shipwreck of, being in fact not faith, but some semblance thereof.

It becomes necessary therefore to inquire whether the Christian church has not unwittingly shifted its centre, and whether in so doing it is not inflicting a

¹ See Professor Sumner in Johnson's *Cyclopedia*.

very grave hurt upon its own most sacred cause. If it has gone from the intuition, or the confidence in the hoped for and the conviction of the things which are not seen, which characterized the ancient worthies and which also characterized Christ and His apostles, then surely there can be no doubt that it has shifted its centre. If it takes any visible event, or any event of which it assumes to offer proof that it was visible at one period in the history of the world, and presents that as an object of faith, it invalidates faith itself. It makes it quite other than the actual faith presented in the Bible. There is melancholy testimony that the church has committed this capital error. For it has come to be insisted upon that the Christian faith includes a considerable variety of visible things; and that one lacks the Christian faith if he does not accept and believe these things. But faith is a conviction of the invisible. That is the essential nature of it. I do not say that it is independent of history, for history has much to do in the development of the conviction. But I do say that a man has faith, if like Abraham (a man without a Bible) he is convicted of the unseen God and Governor of all, if he recognizes and obeys the voice of God within himself.

It has been said that the highest product of evolution in nature is the rational being called man — the being with a soul. But the most important processes of evolution are the later ones. And it is this creation, so to speak, of the intuition in man, this bringing of him face to face with his Creator by means of his own inward convictions, which is the noblest process of evolution we can at present know. It is this which forms and completes man in the image of his Creator.

The inward conviction undoubtedly takes different shape and color in different souls. For some it is a simple conviction of righteousness, and of the consequent devotion of the man himself to the following of righteousness. Among the confusions of argumentation one holds fast to that. In others the conviction is mainly of a Being who is the righteous Guide to our lives, and our Creator. In others the conviction is of immediate duty, as a divinely sacred thing to be done. But in any case the conviction is the faith. Eternal truths become the object of eternal confidence. One passes out of the shows of time by faith and into the realities which cannot be made in any wise a show of. The province of science is the outward. The province of faith or intuition is the inward. I do not for a moment claim that the outward is not of importance, since so large a proportion of our life is in it. But I protest against the confusion of the two provinces. Let the scientific man deal with all outward facts and phenomena, and by all means let him deal with them as best he can; he cannot disturb the faith of any one who has faith. But if your faith rests upon things in his province, outward things, the disturbance, even to the extent of overthrow, is almost sure to come, soon or late.

Let a man believe what he perceives to be true, however that truth comes to him; let him cast himself on that truth, and commit himself to it, and he for his part will belong to the company of those who through faith have wrought righteousness in this world.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God,” we are told. It is by our intuition He approaches us, gets a hearing with us, heals us of our inward disor-

ders, and so draws us into His salvation. But there is no healing of our inward disorders in pinning our belief to any or all historic events, though they be without exception true, for what we need is not more and more of the outward, but a creation of our inward life.

XVIII.

CONDITIONS ATTENDING THE PROGRESS OF TRUTH.

"Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest." — JOHN iv. 35.

"Whose fan is in his hand." — MATTHEW iii. 13.

THE law of increase demands more careful consideration than all are prepared to give it. For it is a law which does not lie superficial and clear before the eyes of men. There is a mystery about it. In certain of the lower ranks of nature it is perhaps generally observed; in the higher ranks of nature it has been less clearly discerned.

Of a handful of wheat two dispositions may be made. It may be ground into flour and baked into bread and eaten; in which case it is so much energy transferred to human vitality. It may be thrown away into the ground, in which case it would appear to be lost. Here then are two dispositions to be made of wheat, or other such thing; the transfer of it as energy into the current of human life, with a little loss in the transformation, on the one hand; and a total loss to the current human life, on the other.

But the total loss is seen to be, after all, the greatest gain, if properly investigated, since the handful of wheat or other grain thrown into fit ground becomes from thirty to a hundred fold, or perchance a thousand fold increased. Now doubtless the major portion of the grain that is each year harvested is sent to the

markets for consumption, and the lesser part is retained to be cast into the ground for future harvests and food. One cannot tell which is the more important, the wheat which is used for food or that which is used for seed. Certainly each is most important in its own time and place. But the grain which is cast away into the soil, to be swallowed up by it, to be dissolved away there, and leave no visible remnant of itself, is the portion which has the increase.

Truth comes to the mind of a man ; the man perceives it, and begins to order his life by it. He digests it, and the energy of it becomes his energy. And he gives it to others. Now in this giving it to others, — a thing which he is bound to do, — he is doing that which he himself is often tempted to look upon as waste and loss. And there is a loss about it, — a wastage, because all people are not fitly prepared for truth. All people are not simple-minded and candid. Very many are full of cares of various kinds, and are so anxious to get on in the world, or so anxious to maintain the ground they have achieved, that they cannot take interest in truth, especially if it have the aspect of new truth. They cannot endanger their prospects, poor souls. And others are too superficial for a steady and constant interest in any truth. And others still are unapproachable by truth. Or at least a truth will lie upon their minds like a pebble upon a beach, rolled in by one wave and rolled out by another. Wherefore there is a good deal of wastage in the giving forth of truth, for which due allowance must needs be made. But in spite of wastage, the law of increase holds in truth as it does in the lower ranks of nature.

The conditions attending the progress of truth are

perplexing ; in fact, to some minds it is perplexing that there should be any progress at all. That truth should grow, enlarge itself, and develop, is more than they appear able to think. Because to many truth is a something, as it were of a mineral kingdom, a precious jewel, to be hoarded, laid up, carefully guarded. This precious something has been taken in hand as by a lapidary, and cut into fit shape, facets made upon it, and finished to a nicety, and then given as a sublime trust to a man. "Here is truth for you, fixed in definite shape, to be kept. Take it and keep it, hand it down to your children in precisely this shape. Do not tamper with it, let it not be scratched nor marred in any wise, but protected." He who thinks that truth is of such a mineral nature, a jewel to be guarded and handed down to his successors in just its original shape, must feel about it as did the man in the parable, who, being entrusted with a talent, took it and hid it in a napkin, and so kept it safe and intact.

But that man in the parable was named a wicked and slothful servant, you will remember, and had his talent taken away from him. He was told, after all the careful and scrupulous hiding of the talent, that he ought to have put it through a process of exchange and enlargement ; that, and not secretion and careful guarding, being the proper use of talents. Wonderfully tenacious have men been of the truth they have had given them. A certain faithfulness they have displayed in their guardianship of it. Only they have mistaken the nature of truth, believing it to be some crystal formation belonging to the mineral kingdom, rather than a vital something, to grow and change the form of it. If we speak of truth as a jewel, our whole meaning in such a simile is that truth is a precious thing ; simply that.

The careful and competent farmer who gets due increase and reward for his labor proceeds in a manner well worth intelligent consideration. When his field is plowed and suitably mellowed to his purpose, he casts the seed into it. And then he takes a look at the fences which surround that field. Sees to it that they are sufficient for their purpose, and will keep out all intrusion of cattle and other animals. Then shuts the gate and leaves that field thus guarded. The wheat springs up and the cattle look over the fence. They would like to get at the grain but are not permitted. The wheat grows in a beautiful manner until the heat and light and rain have done their work upon it and it turns white. Then, behold, everything is complete in that field. Every stalk is complete. every leaf is complete. Every stalk is crowned with its golden crown of the perfected grain. The farmer goes and looks at it. Then some morning he throws open the gate and sends in his workmen with cradle or other device, to cut down all this complete growth. Down it goes before the ruthless blade, and is bound in bundles. Well, that is something, at least. The bundles are orderly, and they are removed to the barn. There then is stored up this treasure. But that is not the end of it. In modern times the farmer brings a great machine to his barn. The wheat which had been fenced in for a time, protected and guarded within a closed gate, which had afterward been stored up in so careful a manner and sheltered, is torn from its place, the bundles broken, and all cast into the roaring machine which eats it up like the devouring monster it is. And the stalks of it, and the chaff of it are cast outside as refuse, while the little grains which loaded the golden heads stream out and are measured and

sent to the world's market to feed mankind. Except for this mankind would go hungry.

This is the process which would be infinitely perplexing to the inexperienced. A great contrast shows itself between the first stages and the last. The first are careful and guarded and protective ; the last disruptive, violent, and apparently wasteful. But the contrast is simply between the seed-time and the harvest. And we may imagine a child to have watched the field, to have been delighted with the growth of the crop, to have rejoiced in its final perfection. This child would protest against the reapers going in at the gate to level the fair growth. He would be appalled at the coming of the machine, with all-devouring mouth. And how many there are who have the feelings of this child, with reference to the way in which truth itself is sometimes dealt with.

To see a truth, which has grown to its shape and proportions in statements, wrested in some manner out of such statements, and in fact cleared of them, is a most grievous sight to many a man whose mind has been impressed by the truths in them. Yet we discover, if there is in us a faculty of discovery, that there are moral seed-times and harvest-times. Surely the teachings of Christ would open our eyes to that fact. There is a time when truth is as it were new given. The truth which has gathered and grown in human experience is taken from its old relations and restrictions and made to serve the purpose of a new sowing. And there is a time when truth is fenced about and guarded. By that Divine Providence which rules in the affairs of men, the truth is left unmo-
lest. The gate is shut upon it by the exceedingly conservative opinions and feelings of men, so that it

shall not be tampered with. In such times truth is not much investigated, and it is held in a vague, indefinite way. The real meaning or purpose of it is not sharply inquired into. Such a period we find in the Jewish history, and repeated again in the Christian history of a half score of centuries. The form of the truth is sacredly cherished. The critical analysis of it hindered and forbidden. Then there comes on gradually the time of sifting, doubt, inquiry. That, as it appears, is the threshing time. And very painful it proves to the lovers of the form of truth, or the dogma. No doubt a fiery time, and a time of tribulation to them.

The son of a Jewish priest, a man who had lived in a peculiar and ascetic manner, a recluse, and possibly a member of one of those little communities which withdrew from the general community of Jewish society, lifted his voice at the fords of the Jordan, where travelers were passing, in protest against the life of the nation. Declared that it was a false kind of life, and to be abandoned, or that nation would be like a tree against whose roots the woodman lays his axe, to cut it down. Therefore all must be changed and rectified. The symbol of this man's mission and message was the rite of baptism. He invited and implored and commanded the people to change, and to wash off the evils of their time, by their repentance. He also declared that a Mightier One should take up his work, and go on with it. And the kind of work of this Mightier One he described in a figure of speech. "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His threshing floor." These are the words which describe the mission of the Successor of John. We are probably aware that a fan of

the kind mentioned is not of the merely ornamental order, not for the personal comfort of the one who carries it, but is one of the instruments of the harvest. Its office is to blow away chaff, and get the grain free of it. A most important thing to do, if it comes in the proper time. Moreover, such is the feeling of the ascetic prophet in the wilderness with reference to this chaff that he goes on to say that an unquenchable fire will be kindled in it, so as to effect its disappearance and utter removal from the world. Could we but examine the heart of this devoted man of the desert, should we not find him deeply sorrowful over the formalism of his countrymen, who cherished every form of truth in so precise a way as to lend weight to the suspicion that they had neither thought for nor interest in the truth itself? We conclude that such was the feeling of this prophet. And that it was entirely justified. A people devoted to chaff is necessarily a chaffy people, having for the most part a chaff-religion, and a most unreal chaff-life in general. Doing things prescribed to them, and having little or no rational conception of their meaning. That I take to be so deplorable a condition for a man or a people as to stir the heart of a reformer to its depths.

The Harvester makes his first appearance. He is the Harvester of the old, and the Sower of the new. For it is well for us to remember that there is no absolutely new thing under the sun.

It has been objected to Christ that He produced no new thing. That He was not original, and the like. It is true. The new springs out of the old. But the great thing is to get the new out of the old. If we carefully scrutinize the work of Christ, shall we not

behold Him always separating between the outward and the apparent, and the inward and true? He casts away nothing of worth which has grown up in human experience. He casts away but the transient, and gathers the abiding into His garner, wherewith to feed the world, and to sow the world with the new tidings.

This then is the character of the opening of the Christian dispensation. Preëminently the time of the fan; a harvest of the growths of the elder times. Temple, ritual, altar, sacrifices, the priesthood, the sacred traditions, the law and the prophets, all yield to the Harvester the real substance that is in them, which real substance they had protected, fenced in, and infolded. Real substance is thus got into usable condition, and is set forth, not as a thing to be looked at and admired, not to say worshiped, but to be incorporated in life as best we may. It is sown in the lives, thinking, and conduct of man to grow as it may. If one is at pains to look back of Christ, at the mission of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Amos, and other of the prophets, he will plainly enough see that they too endeavored to do that which in a fullness of time the Christ did. For they deplored above all the formalism of their times, and sought to awaken in the breast of Israel a distrust of all forms, and a discernment of their meaning. It was over and over asserted by them that God does not require things to be done which were set down in their law. He had given forth those things to contain a teaching for the people. They perversely neglected the teaching, and kept up the things.

It is almost as good as axiomatic that we have seed-time and harvest in our moral affairs; that if there is such a thing as seed-time, the harvest must naturally follow it. But no harvest comes because a man pro-

poses to have it come. The farmer, who should open his gate and summon his reapers while his crop is yet in the green, would do foolishly and be at loss. And he would be no fit farmer. The sun, with its heats increasing and intensifying as the season rolls along, brings the harvest in due course; the showers and moisture bring it. The man observant of their work wisely does his work in accord therewith.

Now we have come to a time in human history which we may fairly call critical. I mean a time beyond all others, of criticism. Everywhere stands the critic, armed and equipped, as the law of criticism directs, keenly bent on pursuing his vocation whoever or whatever may oppose. The critical spirit, evoked in modern times, is by no means on the wane; on the increase rather, and in all departments of human interest. We have our daily dose of criticism in the morning and evening paper, our semi-weekly, and weekly dose, our semi-monthly, and monthly, and bi-monthly, served out to us with regularity. It is no new thing under the sun, of course, but quite new in the extent of it, and the facility by which it gets itself within the notice of all men. A critic may be, and unhappily often is, sufficiently censorious and acid in his criticism to render himself obnoxious to men of peaceful inclination. He is not always, possibly not often, a soft voice crying persuasively in the wilderness of human affairs. Not a harmonious and fascinating voice, — a kind of piercing shriek oftentimes. But clearly enough with something to do and say, nevertheless. A critic may magnify his office to the point of making it the one office at present of use to mankind. He may thus abuse it, and render himself and his work of smallest use to any one. But in the Divine Providence

there is a use of criticism in the proper time of it, to be highly valued by all men. For a critic is a harvester of our human experiences and opinions. And his particular utility is to separate between value and the lack of value. He stands studious and eager to attend upon that work. In business and so-called practical affairs of daily concern, words and sentences convey definite ideas. That is what words and sentences are for. The man of affairs who should receive by mail a letter out of which nothing is to be gotten but confused jargon, would quickly tear up that letter and consign it to wastage. Now it is in religion that words and sentences are necessarily least definite in meaning. Many of the terms of religion are great and trench upon the unspeakable, if not the unthinkable. Yet if religion is closely to relate itself to our lives and conduct, it is necessary to have definite meanings in it. In critical times especially we are forced to find these meanings. And here is the critic to help ; to thresh off the verbiage, historic incident, or any other covering which has grown upon the truth, and lay it bare to you, so that you may have it and know it and digest it.

What is known as the higher criticism prevails, and goes on to prevail in our day, more and more extensively, since no closure can be put upon it. Both higher criticism and lower, and of all shades and grades between, really have but one purpose in them ; viz. : to come at the abiding and the useful. Infidel critic, semi-infidel, or any other kind of critic, what can he do but criticise according to the best light or twilight, or no light which is in him ? He can do nothing against the truth ; that is beyond the power of man. Oxen, the plodding and patient beasts of burden, were

employed by the ancients upon the threshing floors, to tread out the corn. And there may be ox-critics, plodding laborious through our sacred things, heedless of the meaning of them, who yet, if they tread out some corn for us, we may thank God for them and what they have done. Whatever the critic may be, if he but produces in us the due discrimination between the useful and the not useful, the transient and the abiding, he at least serves our cause and the cause of God, irrespective of his own personal motive.

A sower went forth to sow. The field was the mind and moral nature of man. Out of such sowing has come a growth, known in a general way as Christianity. But when you consider what the soil is, that it is the human mind with its faculties of logic and imagination and the like, a crop of dogma was to be expected. And it came. The Christ having threshed out of the chaff of Israel's experience the simple and naked truths of righteousness and faith in God, sowed the field with those truths. And those truths came up, not without weeds. Man's logic, his imagination, his arithmetic even, went into the composition of the growths. The fall of man through the guilt of the first man, the imputation of that guilt to his posterity, the death of all men in sin. The redemption, effecting a new start of our race in Christ, the imputation of His righteousness to the number chosen in Him, the everlasting punishment of those not chosen in Him. These things grew up, bearing resemblance to the very things the Christ had threshed away in the dogmas of the rabbins of the Jews. It was as natural that these dogmas should grow from the seed of truth as that straw should grow from the seed of wheat. For the imagination put upon the track of hunting out the reason

of the sinfulness of man, and the necessity for redemption and the like, built up the dogma of the fall, of imputation, and all the rest of it. All this was explanatory and philosophical, as philosophy then went. And now comes the critical examination of all these things. The fall of man, descent of the race from some higher plane, is subjected to the test of our various findings in nature. Unmistakable evidences of the rise and not the fall of man, as a race, are abundant enough to disprove that dogma. But the grain of truth which has grown in that stalk and the chaff of it, is the fall of men, each one, into sin, upon temptation. The imputation of guilt from the ancestor to the children is also threshed out, and the grain of truth in it discovered and laid bare. Each man is under hereditary influence as a portion of his environment.

As distinguished from these philosophical terms, such as imputation and redemption, there are favorite phrases of symbolism in popular and evangelistic use, such as the "blood of Christ." This phrase is held in dearest regard by many a Christian who has not even sought out its meaning, who has felt that to pry into its significance would be nothing short of an unwarrantable profane intrusion into the sacred mysteries. The mere outwardness, husk, or form of a truth has thus been regarded sacred, and the truth itself made nothing of.

But we live in a world of progress, of change. There is one law which is all inclusive, and that is the law of development. Stop to that law or its working is unattainable. And truth, sacred truth, must also have its course of development and progress. It cannot long be contained in any statement or mass of statements. It increases by its own vitality and out-

grows the most elaborate and finished form in which any age can put it. And above all, religious truth is not stationary; a jewel cut and fashioned by skillful device; it is in the nature of seed, inclosing the elements of growth, else it is no vital truth. Thousands of anxious and earnest souls are doing what they may to keep the Christian truth within the compass of original statements. Statements in the New Testament, or the Bible as a whole; or those which have been cut (and dried) by the medieval doctors. It is useless. As well try to keep oak-trees in acorn forms. And if you do keep oak trees in the acorn, you get oak trees never to the end of time, and have nothing but your acorns.

With respect to truth and its development in the world, there may be said to be four states of mind. 1. Opposition; a repression of and active hostility to the development of truth. This is obviously the worst state of mind for a human being. Paul's word for it, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold down the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them" (Romans i. 18, 19). To hold down, restrain, restrict the progress of truth, by whomsoever done, by religious man or irreligious, is a practical impiety, plainly deserving the wrath of heaven and earth. 2. Indifference. A most barren and hopeless state of mind, truly, upon the face of it, unfit for a being such as man. 3. Anxiety. A nervous dread of progress or change. It does not occur to any among us to have an anxiety for the integrity of the heavens above us. We do not fear that the keenest eye will detect anything there to disbalance and upset the order. With his biggest and

most space-penetrating telescope one is able at most to bring to view the thing that is, and that will injure us not a whit to know. The church treated Galileo as if he had dared to demolish the sun, moon, and stars ; whereas he did but rid the world of some of its superficial chaff theories respecting the heavens. The main danger is not that truth will get a damage, or will suffer an overthrow, but that it will meet a tardy or cold reception from men, who will thus damage themselves. And 4. There is a calm state of mind with reference to the progress of truth, born of confidence, result of faith, toward which all men would do well to strive. And if our own times are times of abounding criticism, rife with skepticism and doubt, and movements of all kinds, they bode not evil to us. It is the wintry season of repressed or frozen mental activity which is to be dreaded. Ages wherein night brooded over the earth, and men were held bound and repressed in their opinions and speech, we have learned to look upon as dark ages. A winter of barren content ; from which, thank God ! we have emerged, to come to a time of activity and growth.

I hold it to be the duty of every intelligent person, and particularly of every adult religious person, to be as discriminating and careful in judgment in the matters of faith as in any other matters ; nay to be more careful and scrupulous in that regard, if possible. There are certain things respecting which one is not driven to doubt. The fundamental intuitions, for example, such as that righteousness is blessedness. That we can gather into our garner as a certainty. Or that God is. Express it how you may ; as Paul expresses it, or as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews expresses it, as Herbert Spencer expresses it, as Matthew

Arnold expresses it, or as you for yourself can best express it. For the most of us that is a certainty. Our own personal responsibility, too, though a question in debate, is yet to most of us, and I doubt not to all of us, practically a certainty. The teachings of Christ and the life of Christ commend themselves to us, when once we get at them. They verify themselves to us. In regard to many other things which have been understood to belong to the Christian religion, but which have really belonged to theology, there is, to say the least, less of certainty. If they are true, and altogether true, we have not the means to verify them. We must take them upon testimony, and that the testimony of men of whom we know little. They therefore do not belong to our certainties. They do not exist as solid rock under our feet for us to take our stand upon for time and for eternity. And then as to a host of things, which have grown with the growth of our religion, can we not see that they belong to the transient and changeable which characterize all growths? We need but examine and test them, with that judgment which God has given us, to perceive that they do not stand in the judgment. They are like the chaff which the wind blows away. They have had their purpose, whatever they are, and performed that to the end of it, and we shall best serve the divine method to let them go. For they are not only not verifiable, but are found to be but emptied forms, containing nothing of use or truth.

The philosophy of evolution renders necessary a restatement of Christian truth. That some restatement is necessitated seems patent to the dullest comprehension. But that it becomes necessary under any stress whatever to abandon any truth is absurd. In-

deed an abandoned truth is just as much a truth as one accepted. The Bible itself is subject to criticism or the judgment of mankind. It were a mischief, and a very grave one, that we should employ no judgment upon it. Nothing comes within the range of the phenomenal of which any man or men can have the right to say, "You must not exercise your judgment upon this." The Bible is a growth, and therefore has come according to the law of vital growths; it has its abiding elements, and its elements of transition and change. I pluck the rose from the bush, and leave the bush. I pick the orange from the tree, and make no attempt to swallow either the tree or the orange skin. And what are all genuine attempts at teaching religion, but the disengagement of the truth inclosed in passage of Holy Writ from its envelopment of incident, or song, or proverb, or parable, or story, and the giving forth of that as the thing sought?

The serious concern of all men ought to be to know the truth, and to commit themselves to it. Not to commit themselves to the uncertainties, but the certainties. So far as they do that, they will have no fear of the threshing process of criticism which comes at various periods, and has now come. They will know that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. They will be sure that there is a Lord of the seed-time and a Lord of the harvest. Instead of praying the Lord of the harvest that He will restrain the labors of the critic, they will rather pray that He will send more laborers into His harvest, so that more and more the truth shall be brought into vital relation with the lives of men, and so that men shall actually live, with increasing success, the lovely and loving life of the Son of God.

Says the prophet Jeremiah : —

The prophet with whom is a dream, let him tell a dream ; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat ? saith the Lord.

And Isaiah says : —

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? saith the Lord : I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts ; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of great he goats. When ye come to be seen before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts ? Bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination unto me ; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with ; . . . Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes : cease to do evil ; learn to do well ; seek judgment, righten the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

And Micah says : —

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?

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